ECLIPSE COMICS
WHERE ISZAT KID?
$2.00 in USA
#2
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ECLIPSE™
MONTHLY
Lookin' for Cap'n Quick
by Marshall Rogers
With: STATIC by Steve Ditko
the Masked Man by B. C. Boyer
SAM SCRIMSER'S DOPE adapted by Trina Robbins
AND- RIO - by Doug Wildey

One of the great things about working in the comics field is that you can get immediate, direct response to what you're doing. As I write this, advance copies of ECLIPSE MONTHLY no. 1 are circulating among the attendees at this year's Chicago Comics Con. We had a box air-freighted from our printer in Canada to the Windy City. (Special thanks to Bob, Angelo and the gang up there in Montreal for making this possible!)

The reaction has been overwhelming. As you could tell from my editorial last issue, I'm proud of the group of creators cat and I assembled in our premiere issue. Each one of them is here with us again this month. And I know they'll be pleased as punch to hear me pass along such comments as:

"RIO is one of the best colored comics I've ever seen!"

"This is Marshall Rogers' best work in years! I just love Cap'n Quick and those sneakers!"

"I've followed THE MASKED MAN since his start in ECLIPSE MAGAZINE, and B. C. Boyer has just now hit his stride!"

"Trina's adaptation of DOPE looks *so* much better in color!"

"STATIC is Ditko's finest since The Blue Beetle . . . maybe even Spider-Man!"

What can I say? You've bowled us over with your reaction. Allow me to say 'thanks' from all concerned, and to repeat that cat and I are doing our best to bring you issue after issue of the highest quality comics in a *variety* of styles and genres.

In fact, next issue brings the color debut of the critically acclaimed RAGAMUFFINS series by Don McGregor and Gene Colan. Joining them this time our will be inker/colorist Klaus Janson, who adds an entire new dimension to these stories of growing up in the early 1950s.

And for you fans of RIO who wonder if you will ever encounter this daring adventurer again, don't worry — Doug Wildey and his hero will return in issue no. 5 in another exciting story.

There's also been some wondering about who did the coloring on CAP'N QUICK and RIO. The colorists were, respectively, Marshall Rogers and Doug Wildey themselves!

What else do we have planned for future issues? Well . . . you wouldn't want us to give *all* of our secrets away, would you? Let's just say that we've got genres up our sleeves that you've never even *heard* of.

But while some series will be coming and going, certain strips like CAP'N QUICK AND A FOOZLE and THE MASKED MAN are here to stay.

At any rate, enjoy your read this time around. We'll be starting our letter column soon, so write and tell us what you're thinking and what you'd like to see more of.

We've moved our editorial offices since last issue, so please send all your mail to this new address:

ECLIPSE COMICS
P. O. Box 199
Guerneville, California 95446

Until next issue, surf's up!

Dean

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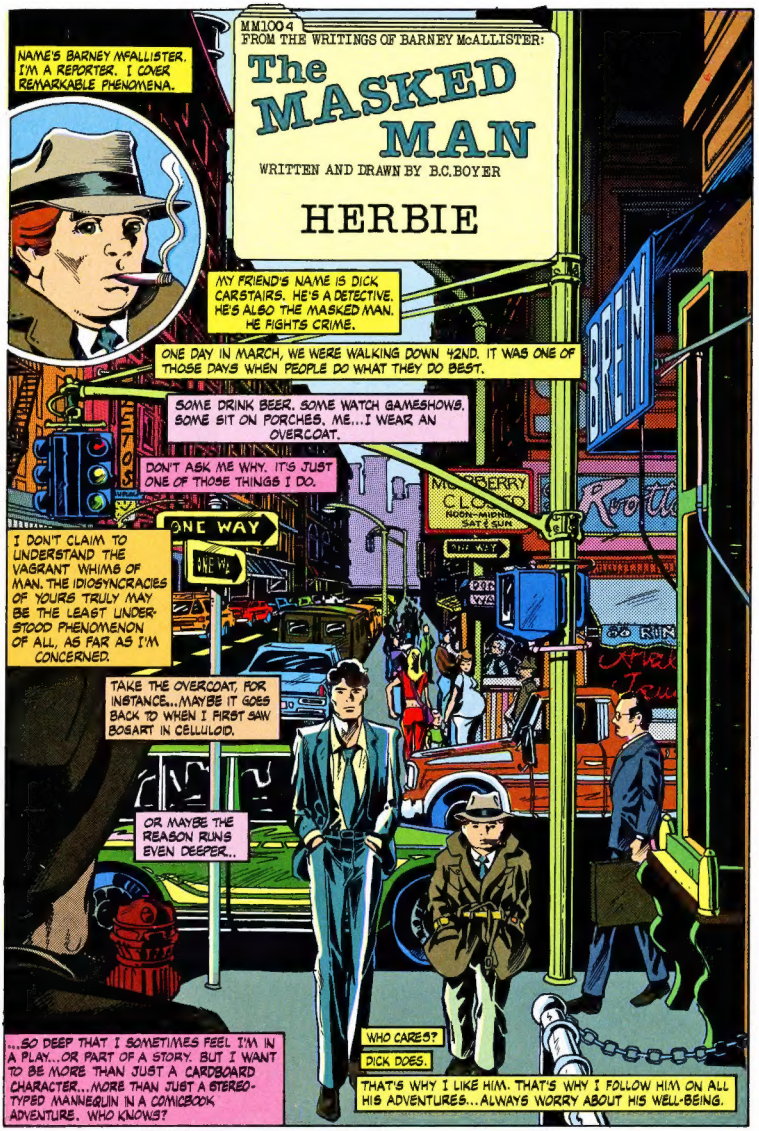
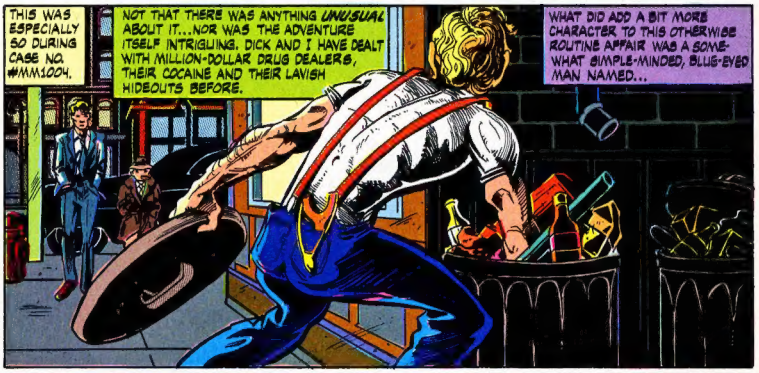

MM1004
FROM THE WRITINGS OF BARNEY McALLISTER:
The MASKED MAN
WRITTEN AND DRAWN BY B.C.BOYER
HERBIE
NAME'S BARNEY MCALLISTER. I'M A REPORTER. I COVER REMARKABLE PHENOMENA.
MY FRIEND'S NAME IS DICK CARSTAIRS. HE'S A DETECTIVE. HE'S ALSO THE MASKED MAN. HE FIGHTS CRIME.
ONE DAY IN MARCH, WE WERE WALKING DOWN 42ND. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE DAYS WHEN PEOPLE DO WHAT THEY DO BEST.
SOME DRINK BEER. SOME WATCH GAMESHOWS. SOME SIT ON PORCHES. ME...I WEAR AN OVERCOAT.
DON'T ASK ME WHY. IT'S JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS I DO.
I DON'T CLAIM TO UNDERSTAND THE VAGRANT WHIMS OF MAN. THE IDIOSYNCRACIES OF YOURS TRULY MAY BE THE LEAST UNDERSTOOD PHENOMENON OF ALL, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED.
TAKE THE OVERCOAT, FOR INSTANCE...MAYBE IT GOES BACK TO WHEN I FIRST SAW BOGART IN CELLULOID.
OR MAYBE THE REASON RUNS EVEN DEEPER...
...SO DEEP THAT I SOMETIMES FEEL I'M IN A PLAY...OR PART OF A STORY. BUT I WANT TO BE MORE THAN JUST A CARDBOARD CHARACTER...MORE THAN JUST A STEREOTYPED MANNEQUIN IN A COMICBOOK ADVENTURE. WHO KNOWS?
WHO CARES?
DICK DOES.
THAT'S WHY I LIKE HIM. THAT'S WHY I FOLLOW HIM ON ALL HIS ADVENTURES...ALWAYS WORRY ABOUT HIS WELL-BEING.
ONE WAY
BREAM
NOON-MIDNI
SAT & SUN

LETTERED BY: CARRIE McCARTHY

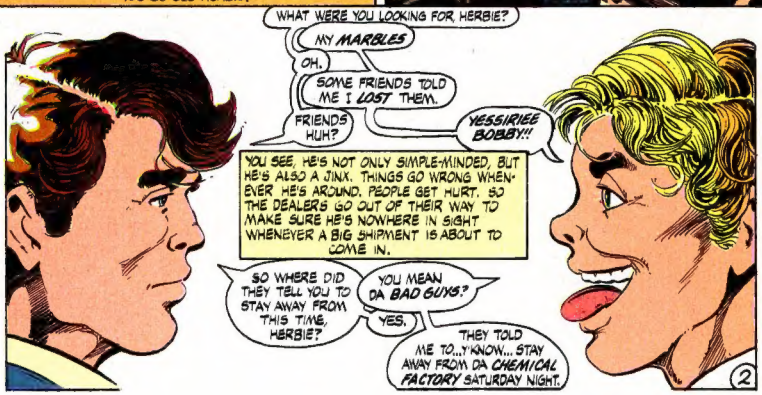
COLORED BY: DENIS McFARLING

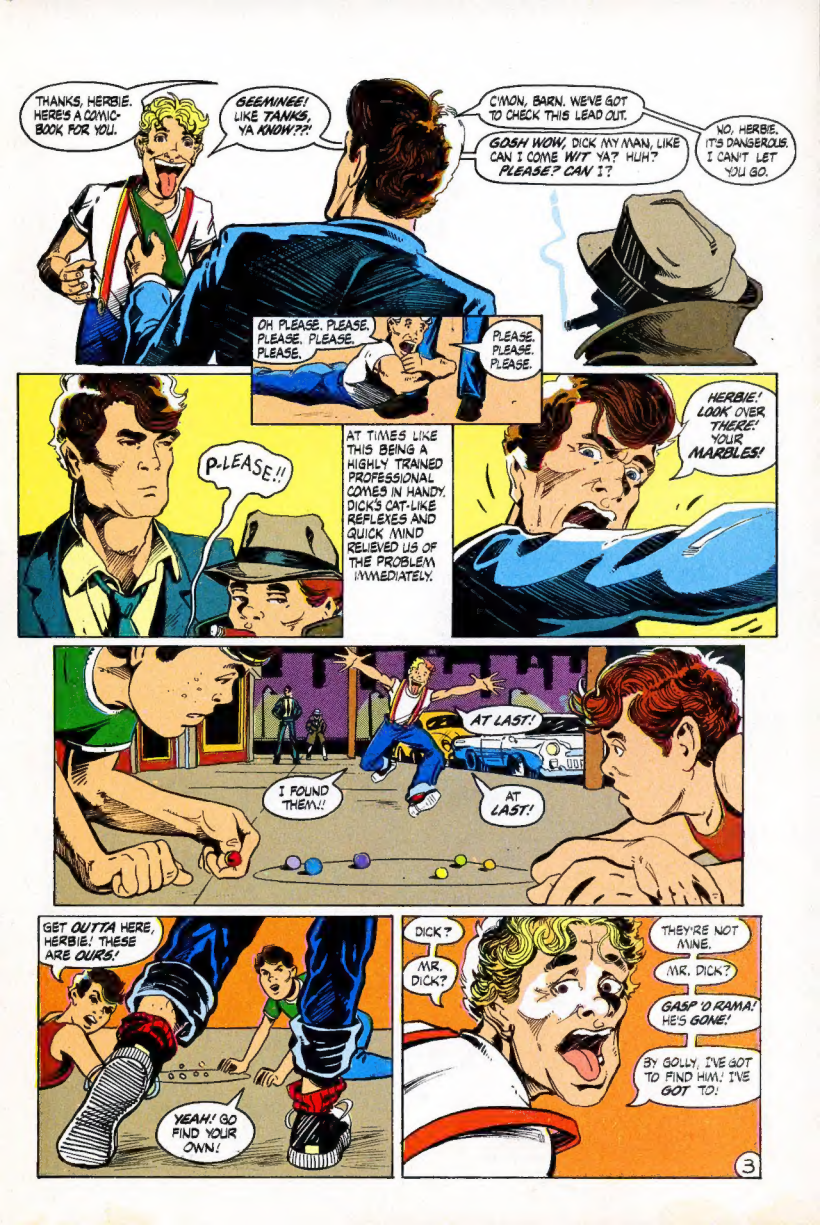
EDITED BY: CAT & YRONWODE


THIS WAS ESPECIALLY SO DURING CASE NO. #MM1004.
NOT THAT THERE WAS ANYTHING UNUSUAL ABOUT IT...NOR WAS THE ADVENTURE ITSELF INTRIGUING. DICK AND I HAVE DEALT WITH MILLION-DOLLAR DRUG DEALERS, THEIR COCAINE AND THEIR LAVISH HIDEOUTS BEFORE.
WHAT DID ADD A BIT MORE CHARACTER TO THIS OTHERWISE ROUTINE AFFAIR WAS A SOMEWHAT SIMPLE-MINDED, BLUG-EYED MAN NAMED...

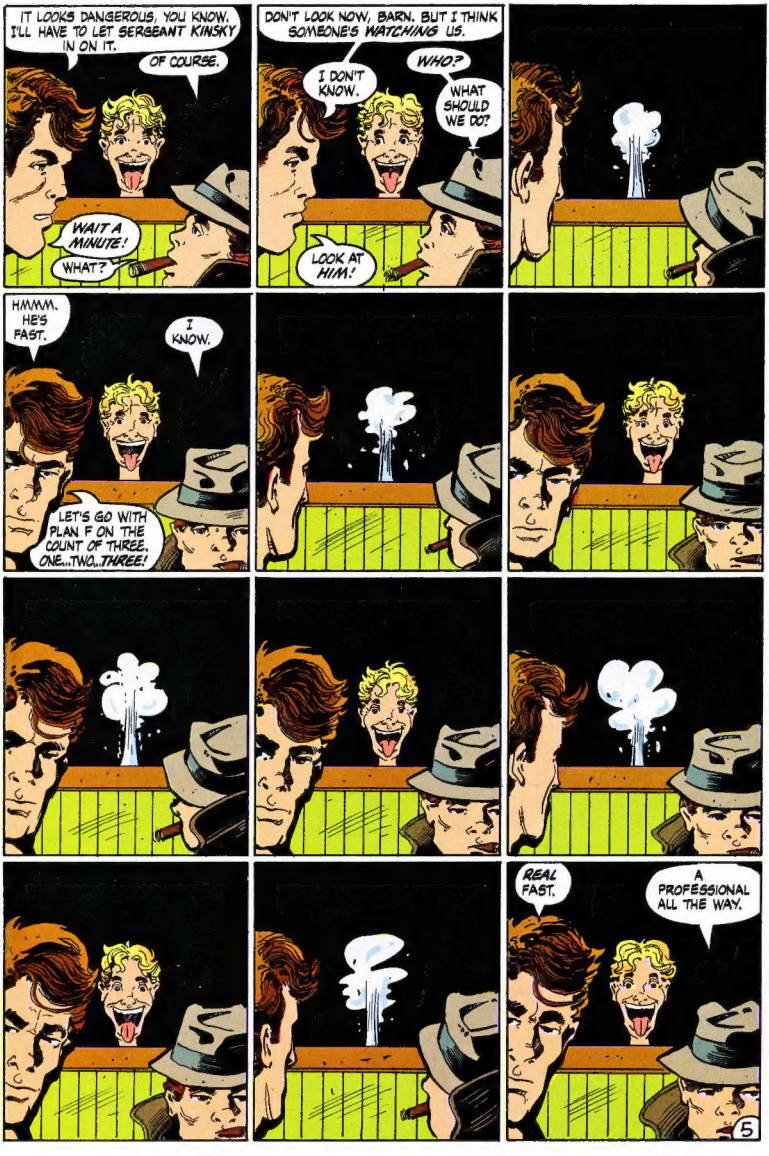
HERBIE WILCOX.
HIYA, DICK!! HOWYA DOIN'? HUH? HOW YA DOIN'??
CATCH ANY BAD GUYS?
YOU'RE MY FAVORITE, YOU KNOW.
YESSIREE BOBBY.
MY FAVORITE!!
HE'S THE LOCAL IDIOT. A TWENTY-EIGHT YEAR OLD WHO LEFT HIS BRAIN IN KINDERGARTEN.
YOU MAY NOT BELIEVE THIS, BUT IF YOU WANT TO BE A HIGH CALIBER DETECTIVE AND YOU'RE RUNNING LOW ON LEADS... YOU GO SEE HERBIE.

WE'RE FINE HERBIE, AND YOU...?
SEE WILIKERS, DICK MY MAN, LIKE HOT SPIT, YA KNOW?
ALTHOUGH HE'S RETARDED, HE KNOWS WHERE AND WHEN BIG DRUG DEALS ARE ABOUT TO TAKE PLACE.

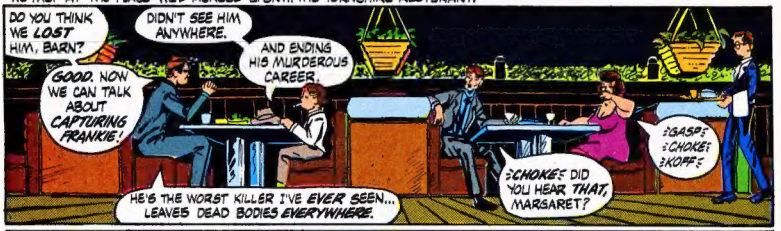

WHAT WERE YOU LOOKING FOR HERBIE?
MY MARBLES
OH.
SOME FRIENDS TOLD ME I LOST THEM.
FRIENDS HUH?
YESSIREE BOBBY!!
YOU SEE, HE'S NOT ONLY SIMPLE-MINDED, BUT HE'S ALSO A JINX. THINGS GO WRONG WHENEVER HE'S AROUND. PEOPLE GET HURT. SO THE DEALERS GO OUT OF THEIR WAY TO MAKE SURE HE'S NOWHERE IN SIGHT WHENEVER A BIG SHIPMENT IS ABOUT TO COME IN.
SO WHERE DID THEY TELL YOU TO STAY AWAY FROM THIS TIME, HERBIE?
YOU MEAN DA BAD GUYS?
YES.
THEY TOLD ME TO...Y'KNOW... STAY AWAY FROM DA CHEMICAL FACTORY SATURDAY NIGHT.

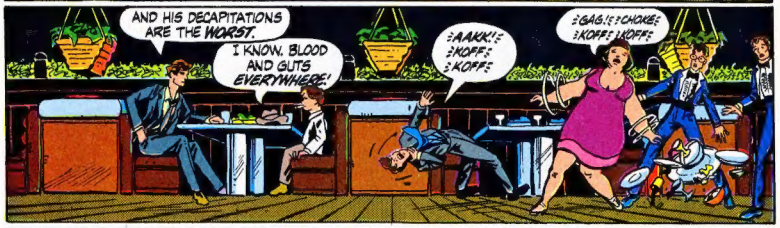

THANKS, HERBIE. HERE'S A COMIC-BOOK FOR YOU.
GEEMINEE! LIKE TANKS, YA KNOW??
C'MON, BARN. WE'VE GOT TO CHECK THIS LEAD OUT.
GOSH WOW, DICK MY MAN, LIKE CAN I COME WIT YA? HUH? PLEASE? CAN I?
NO, HERBIE. IT'S DANGEROUS. I CAN'T LET YOU GO.
OH PLEASE. PLEASE. PLEASE. PLEASE. PLEASE.
PLEASE. PLEASE. PLEASE.
P-LEASE!!
AT TIMES LIKE THIS BEING A HIGHLY TRAINED PROFESSIONAL COMES IN HANDY. DICK'S CAT-LIKE REFLEXES AND QUICK MIND RELIEVED US OF THE PROBLEM IMMEDIATELY.
HERBIE! LOOK OVER THERE! YOUR MARBLES!
I FOUND THEM!!
AT LAST!
AT LAST!
GET OUTTA HERE, HERBIE! THESE ARE OURS!
YEAH! GO FIND YOUR OWN!
DICK?
MR. DICK?
THEY'RE NOT MINE.
MR. DICK?
GASP 'O RAMA! HE'S GONE!
BY GOLLY, I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM! I'VE GOT TO!
3

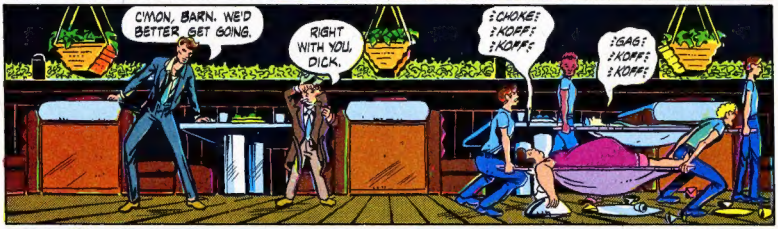
HERBIE'S LEADS ARE ALWAYS GOOD. BUT ONE MUST DOUBLE CHECK JUST TO BE SURE. SO THE NEXT PLACE ON OUR LIST WAS VAGABOND CORNER.
AH GOOD. THERE THEY ARE.
NOW I'LL JUST PUT ON THIS NEATO DISGUISE.
HEY, WILLIE, HOW ARE YOU DOING!?
FINE.
DO YOU KNOW ANYTHING COMING DOWN SATURDAY NIGHT?
SOME OF THE OTHERS MIGHT.
HOW 'BOUT YOU, TOM?
NO, SIR.
ERNIE?
NOPE.
HOW ABOUT YOU, SIR?
PARDON ME. WHAT DID HE SAY?
MUMBLE...MUMBLE
MUMBLE.
I THINK HE SAID HE'S AN INTERNATIONAL SPY AND WE SHOULDN'T TALK TO HIM.
I'VE GOT SOMETHING FOR YOU, DICK.
WHAT'S THAT, JOHN?
THEY PAID OL' JAKE TO BE A MESSENGER.
HE SAID FRANKIE'S PLANNING SOMETHING SATURDAY NIGHT.
FRANKIE?
BEHIND THE CHEMICAL FACTORY.
ONE WAY
THAT'S IT!
THE CARDS ARE IN PLACE.
WE'VE GOT TO MAKE OUR MOVE.
WE'LL GET TWO BIRDS WITH ONE STONE. STOP THE COCAINE DEAL. AND..
GET FRANKIE!
YES!
4

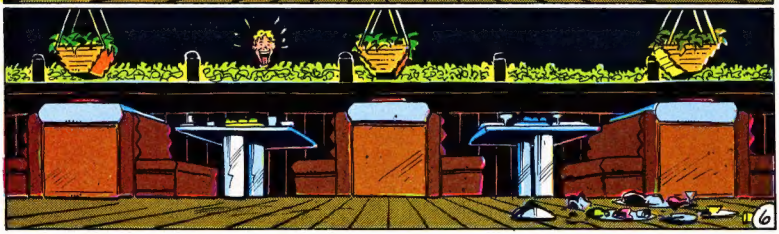

IT LOOKS DANGEROUS, YOU KNOW. I'LL HAVE TO LET SERGEANT KINSKY IN ON IT.
OF COURSE.
WAIT A MINUTE!
WHAT?
DON'T LOOK NOW, BARN. BUT I THINK SOMEONE'S WATCHING US.
I DON'T KNOW.
WHO?
WHAT SHOULD WE DO?
LOOK AT HIM!
HMMM. HE'S FAST.
I KNOW.
LET'S GO WITH PLAN F ON THE COUNT OF THREE. ONE...TWO..THREE!
REAL FAST.
A PROFESSIONAL ALL THE WAY.

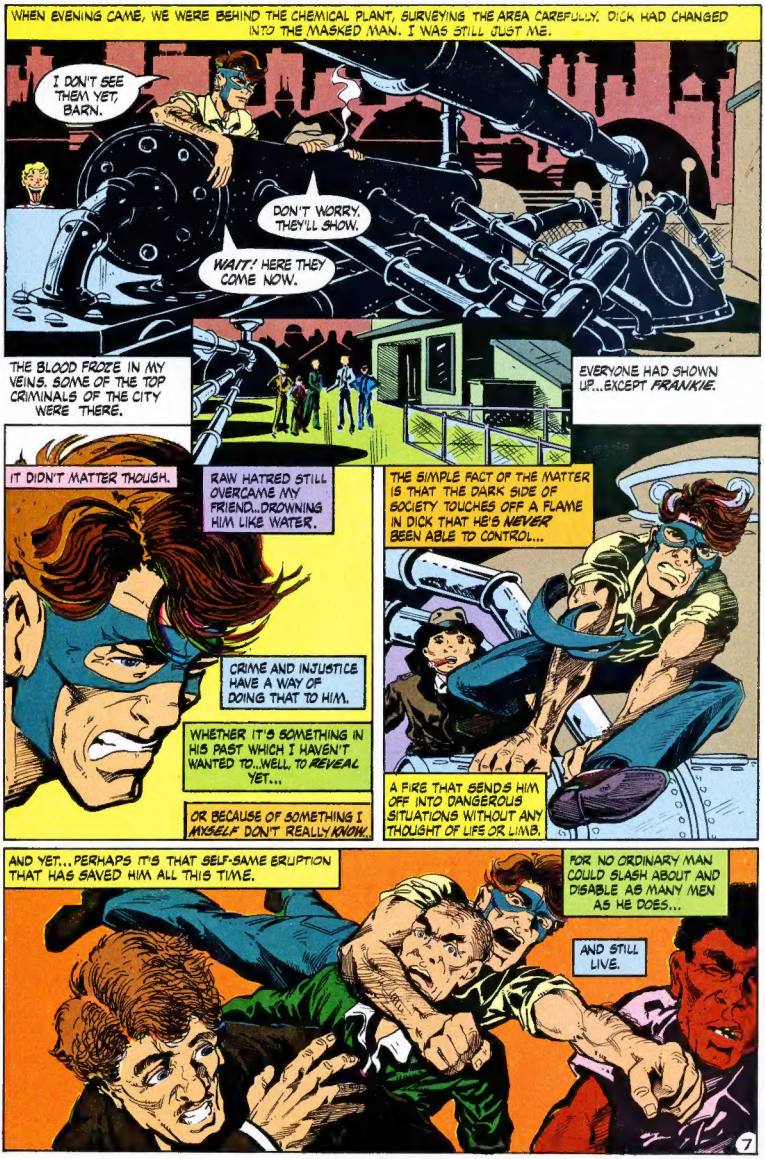
WE HAD TO GET RID OF WHOEVER WAS FOLLOWING US. WE WENT WITH PLAN F-212. AFTER SEPARATING, WE EACH WENT THROUGH DIFFERENT ALLEYS, SUBWAYS, BACK STREETS AND HIGHWAYS TO SHAKE THE TAIL. FINALLY, AFTER A COUPLE OF HOURS, WE MET AT THE PLACE WE'D AGREED UPON...THE YORKSHIRE RESTURANT.


DO YOU THINK WE LOST HIM, BARN?
DIDN'T SEE HIM ANYWHERE.
AND ENDING HIS MURDEROUS CAREER.
GOOD. NOW WE CAN TALK ABOUT CAPTURING FRANKIE!
:GASP: :CHOKE: :KOFF:
HE'S THE WORST KILLER I'VE EVER SEEN... LEAVES DEAD BODIES EVERYWHERE.
:CHOKE: DID YOU HEAR THAT, MARGARET?








WHEN EVENING CAME, WE WERE BEHIND THE CHEMICAL PLANT, SURVEYING THE AREA CAREFULLY. DICK HAD CHANGED INTO THE MASKED MAN. I WAS STILL JUST ME.
I DON'T SEE THEM YET, BARN.
DON'T WORRY. THEY'LL SHOW.
WAIT! HERE THEY COME NOW.
THE BLOOD FROZE IN MY VEINS. SOME OF THE TOP CRIMINALS OF THE CITY WERE THERE.
EVERYONE HAD SHOWN UP...EXCEPT FRANKIE.
IT DIDN'T MATTER THOUGH.
RAW HATRED STILL OVERCAME MY FRIEND...DROWNING HIM LIKE WATER.
CRIME AND INJUSTICE HAVE A WAY OF DOING THAT TO HIM.
WHETHER IT'S SOMETHING IN HIS PAST WHICH I HAVEN'T WANTED TO...WELL, TO REVEAL YET...
OR BECAUSE OF SOMETHING I MYSELF DON'T REALLY KNOW.
THE SIMPLE FACT OF THE MATTER IS THAT THE DARK SIDE OF SOCIETY TOUCHES OFF A FLAME IN DICK THAT HE'S NEVER BEEN ABLE TO CONTROL...
A FIRE THAT SENDS HIM OFF INTO DANGEROUS SITUATIONS WITHOUT ANY THOUGHT OF LIFE OR LIMB.
AND YET...PERHAPS IT'S THAT SELF-SAME ERUPTION THAT HAS SAVED HIM ALL THIS TIME.
FOR NO ORDINARY MAN COULD SLASH ABOUT AND DISABLE AS MANY MEN AS HE DOES...
AND STILL LIVE.
7

STILL... I FEAR THE DAY WILL COME WHEN MY BEST FRIEND IS STOPPED COLD... WHEN HIS HAPHAZARD LOSS OF CONTROL GETS THE BEST OF HIM.
SUCH WERE THE THOUGHTS THAT RACED THROUGH MY MIND WHEN THE COCAINE DEALERS FINALLY SUBDUED HIM.
ALRIGHT, MASKED MAN! THIS IS IT! I'M GONNA KILL YOU BEFORE YOUR NEXT BREATH!
WAIT A MINUTE! HERE COMES HERBIE THE JINX! NO WONDER WE'RE HAVING TROUBLE!
HIYA FOLKS! MIND IF I DROP IN?
DON'T WORRY, FELLAS. I'LL HANDLE HIM.
OOOFF!
ACK!
YEOWW!!
C'MON, YOU GUYS! LET'S GET 'IM!
8

SUDDENLY, THUNDEROUS SHOTS RANG OUT! DICK AND I DOVE FOR COVER.
IT WAS ALL OVER IN THREE BLAZING MINUTES. WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARED THERE WAS ONLY ONE MAN LEFT STANDING.
ARE YOU GUYS ALLRIGHT?
I...I
HUH...
YOU HAD ME WORRIED THERE FOR A MINUTE, DICK.
YOU SHOULDN'T DO THINGS LIKE THAT.
WHO, WHO...
NAME'S FRED STONE.
I'M AN UNDERCOVER COP.
BUT JUST TO BE SAFE...
CALL ME HERBIE.

THEN...THEN YOU'RE NOT... UH... DEMENTED?
DEMENTED? OH SURE.
YOU GOTTA BE, IN THIS LINE OF BUSINESS!
HOW DO YOU KNOW MY IDENTITY?
I FOLLOWED YOU, REMEMBER.
BUT DON'T WORRY, DICK. YOUR SECRETS SAFE WITH ME.
I DON'T KNOW WHAT KIND OF VENDETTA YOU'VE GOT AGAINST CRIME, BUT WHATEVER IT IS... I AIN'T GONNA STOP YOU.
WHEN I SAW YOU OUT THERE, FIGHTING...
IT REMINDED ME OF WHAT I'VE SEEN...
IN MIRRORS.
YOU 'N ME ARE ALIKE, DICK. WE BOTH WEAR MASKS...AND THEN... WHEN THE TIME COMES...WE BREAK LOOSE WITH A VENGEANCE.
NEVER KNOWING IF WE'LL SEE THE NEXT DAY.
I DON'T KNOW WHY WE DO SUCH CRAZY THINGS.
DO YOU?
MAYBE IT'S BECAUSE...
WHEN WE GET HOME AT NIGHT...
THERE'S NO ONE THERE... WAITING FOR US...
NO ONE THERE...TO MAKE IT ALL WORTH WHILE.
OH WELL. I BETTER GET GOING.
NO, HERBIE! WAIT!
GOT TO. DON'T WANT TO BLOW MY COVER. I ALREADY CALLED THE POLICE. THEY'LL BE HERE SOON.
PLEASE HERBIE! WAIT!
AW C'MON, DICK, LIKE GASP 'O RAMA. YA KNOW!! HA! HA! HA!
OOWW! MY ACHIN' JAW.
SUCH IS THE MAN BEHIND THE MASK. SUCH IS THE CHARACTER OF THIS TALE. WE STOOD AND WATCHED AS HERBIE WALKED AWAY. "SOMEDAY," I THOUGHT, "SOMEDAY I'M GOING TO WRITE A STORY ABOUT THAT MAN."

STATIC

©83 S. Ditko

THE EXPLODER!

CREATED, WRITTEN AND DRAWN by STEVE DITKO

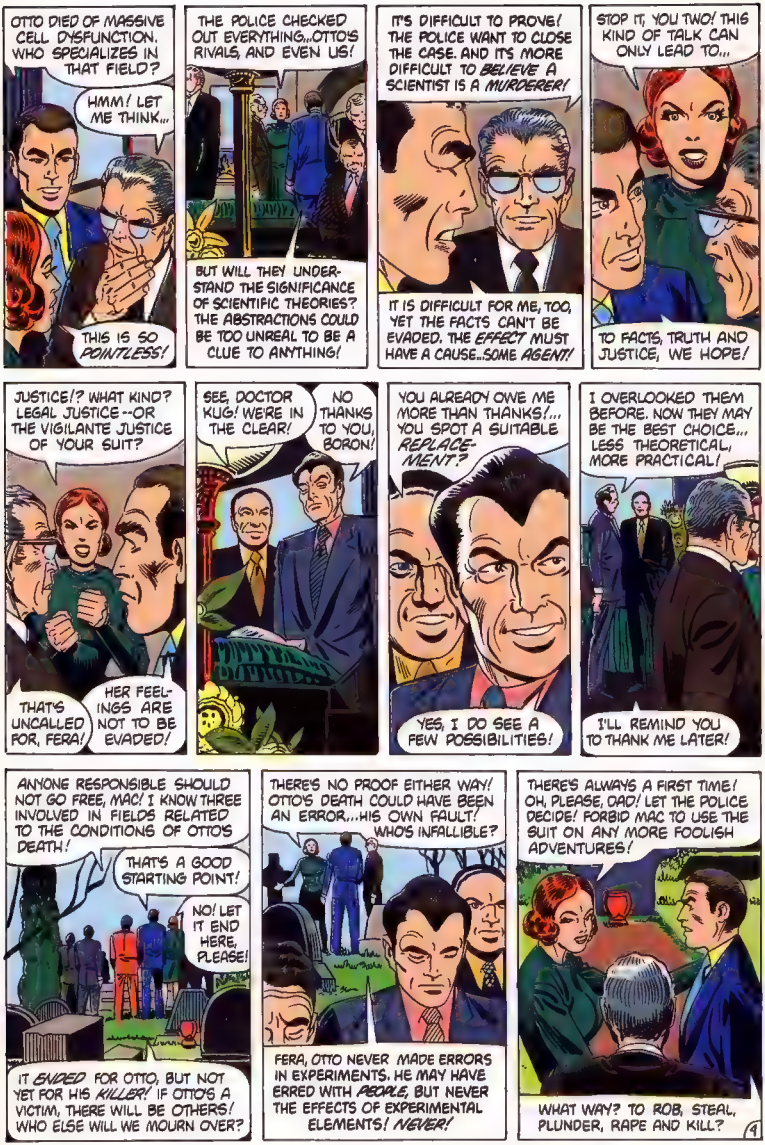
LETTERED BY KEN BRUZENAK * COLORED BY DENIS McFARLING

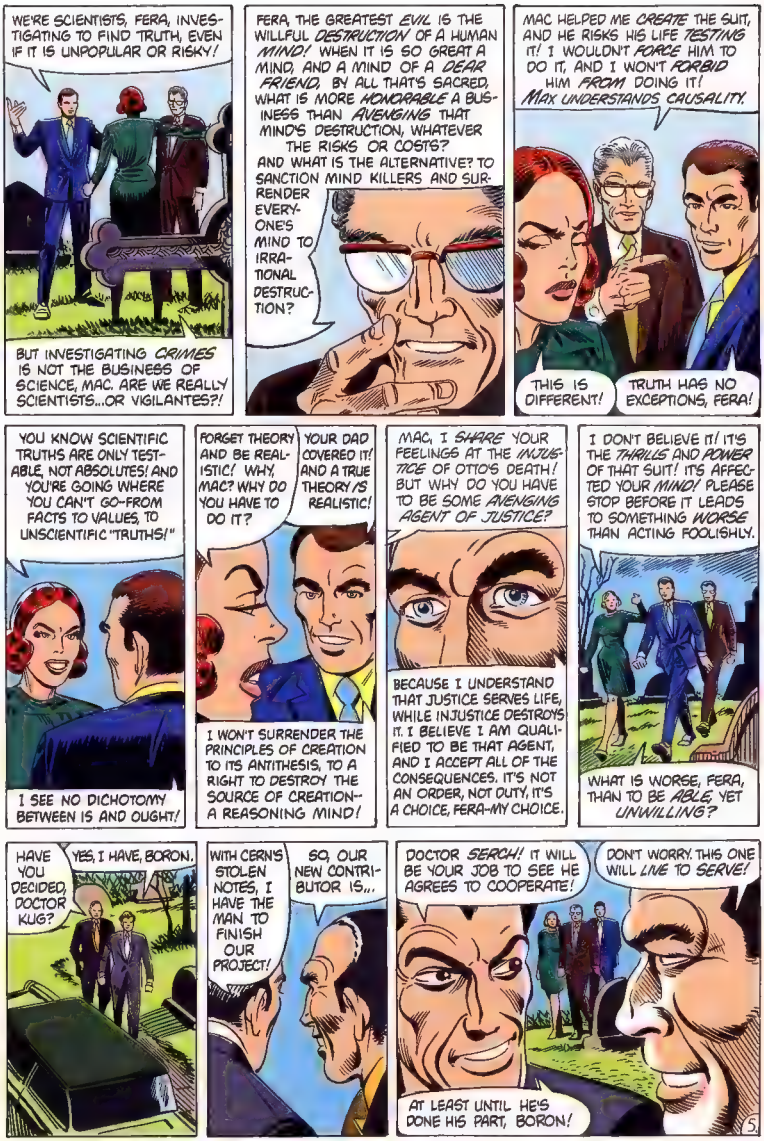
EDITED BY DEAN MULLANEY

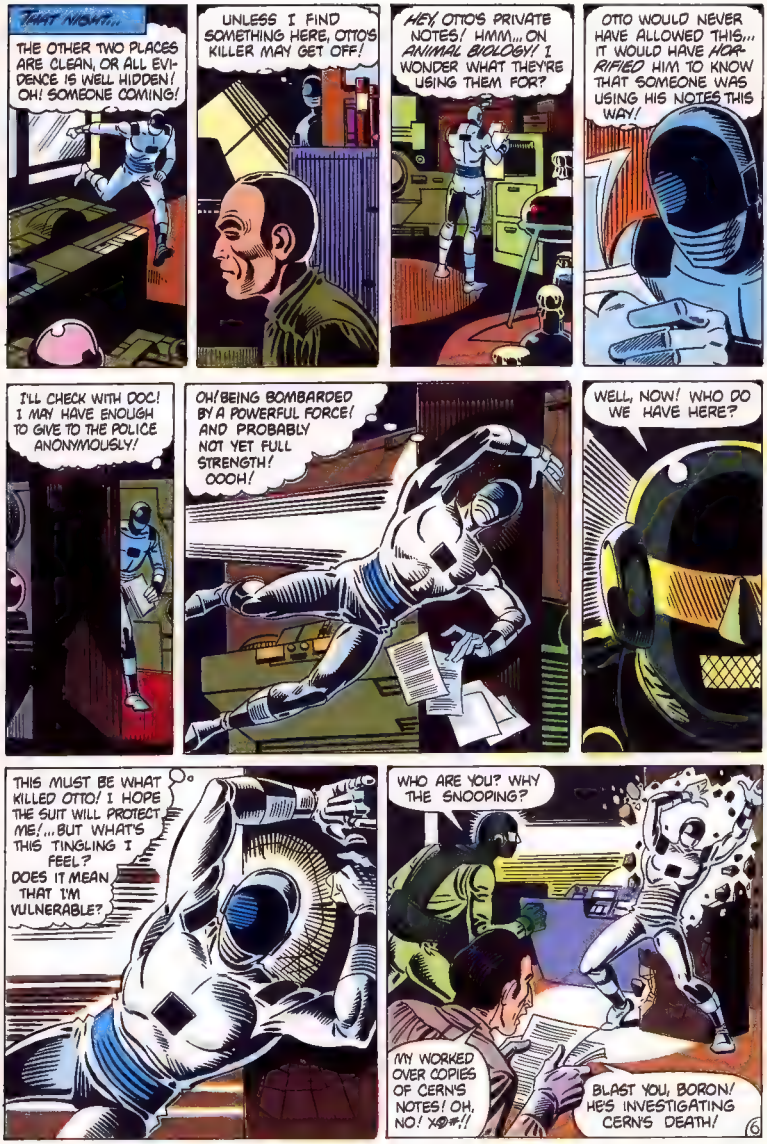
AT THE QUEST RESEARCH LAB, MAC REY, UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYES OF DOCTOR ED SERCH AND HIS DAUGHTER, FERA, TESTS THE POTENTIAL OF THE EXPERIMENTAL SUIT AND HIS OWN ALTERED BODY POWERS BROUGHT ABOUT BY A CRIMINALLY CAUSED ACCIDENT...
DOC, THE ENERGY HAS FORMED SOME KIND OF MAGNETIC FORCE FIELD! I CAN CONTROL IT, AND THE FIELD ENABLES ME TO HOLD ON TO THE WALL'S METAL BEAM! THE SUIT'S MECHANISM, POWER AND MY MIND SEEM INTEGRATED! THE SUIT IS LIKE A...A MAGIC OUTER SKIN!
WE KEEP LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE SUIT'S POWERS AND YOUR CONTROL OVER THEM!
OH, DAD, THIS IS ALL SO...SO FRIGHTENING... SO OMINOUS!
GO EASY, MAC! WE DON'T KNOW HOW LONG THAT FIELD OR THE POWER WILL LAST! THE ENERGY COULD DIE OUT AT THE WORST POSSIBLE TIME.
1.

THE POWER IS LIKE A SELF-GENERATING LIVING ORGANISM. BUT WHAT'S IT FEEDING ON?
OOPS!
GO, IT CAN ALSO DIE! BE CAREFUL!
PERHAPS I JUST MOVED BEYOND THE FIELD'S RANGE!
MAC, WE WARNED YOU!
NO SWEAT! IT'S RISKY, BUT WE LEARNED SOMETHING!
DAD, HE'S GETTING TOO RECK-LESS!
MAYBE! NOW LET'S ANALYZE THIS DATA!
BUT HE BELIEVES THE SUIT MAKES HIM INDESTRUCT-IBLE!
MAC, PROMISE ME YOU WON'T USE THE SUIT ON ANY FOOLISH ADVEN-TURES! PLEASE?
FERA, DON'T ASK ME TO MAKE THAT KIND OF PROMISE!
WHY NOT?
I HAVE NO INTENTION OF USING THE SUIT OUTSIDE THE LAB, AND I RESENT YOUR ATTEMPT TO EXTRACT A PROMISE GOVERNING MY ACTIONS!
I JUST DON'T WANT YOU TO GET HURT!
AND YOU THINK I DO..THAT I HAVE SOME SELF-DESTRUCTIVE WISH?!
NO! IT... IT'S THAT SUIT! ITS POWERS ARE AN EXCITING TEMPTA-TION TO YOU!
AND YOU WANT TO PROTECT ME FROM MY WEAK, THRILL-SEEKING SELF! YOU WANT TO THINK FOR ME?
ARE YOU BEING OBJECTIVE ABOUT THIS, MAC?
WHILE, ELSEWHERE, OTHERS ARE SEEKERS AND FINDERS.
YOU FOOL! YOU COULD HAVE COMPROMISED AND LIVED! NOW IT'S TOO LATE! BY FIGHTING ME, DOCTOR CERN...
YOU'VE BROUGHT DEATH ON YOURSELF!
2.

X@#%!! HE MADE ME REACT WITH TOO MUCH POWER! IT LOOKS LIKE I KILLED MY PAY-OFF!
THE BOSS WON'T LIKE THIS, BUT HE'LL HAVE TO ACCEPT IT!
LATER, WHEN A TRIO KEEP AN APPOINTMENT...
DOCTOR CERN IS DEAD. AND IN A HORRIBLE WAY! IT LOOKS LIKE HIS BODY CELLS EXPLODED INSIDE HIM!
OH, NO, OLD DEAR FRIEND! WHY? HOW? DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH WHY YOU WANTED TO TALK TO ME?
ALIVE! YOU FOOL! I NEEDED CERN ALIVE, BORON!
I SAID I COULDN'T HELP IT, DOCTOR KUG! BE CAREFUL! I DON'T LIKE ABUSE...FROM ANYONE!
AND I CAN'T AFFORD SUCH COSTLY ERRORS! WE'D BETTER BE MORE CAREFUL!
YAH! WE'D BETTER BE!
MY ORIGINAL PLAN IS RUINED... MAYBE FOR GOOD! @#%!!
SO, FIND SOMEONE ELSE! NO ONE IS IRREPLACABLE!
BODIES AREN'T, BUT MINDS ARE. I NEED A UNIQUE, CREATIVE MIND TO FINISH MY PROJECT!
FIND ANOTHER BRAINY ONE AND I'LL GET HIM TO COOPERATE!
POOR OTTO! A TRUE COSMIC TRAGEDY... A GIANT MIND IS NO MORE!
I FEEL LIKE A PATIENT WHO HAS LOST HIS DOCTOR!
THE POLICE LEAN TOWARD ACCIDENTAL DEATH! AN EXPERIMENT GONE WRONG! IT'S MORE INJUSTICE TO OTTO!
DOC, WHAT IF SOMEONE WANTED OTTO, BUT NOT DEAD?
DO YOU THINK THAT SOMEONE WANTED INFORMATION OTTO HAD, AND KILLED HIM ACCIDENTALLY?!
MUST YOU TWO DISCUSS THIS?
3


OTTO DIED OF MASSIVE CELL DYSFUNCTION. WHO SPECIALIZES IN THAT FIELD?
HMM! LET ME THINK...
THIS IS SO POINTLESS!
THE POLICE CHECKED OUT EVERYTHING...OTTO'S RIVALS, AND EVEN US!
BUT WILL THEY UNDERSTAND THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SCIENTIFIC THEORIES? THE ABSTRACTIONS COULD BE TOO UNREAL TO BE A CLUE TO ANYTHING!
IT'S DIFFICULT TO PROVE! THE POLICE WANT TO CLOSE THE CASE. AND IT'S MORE DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE A SCIENTIST IS A MURDERER!
IT IS DIFFICULT FOR ME, TOO, YET THE FACTS CAN'T BE EVADED. THE EFFECT MUST HAVE A CAUSE...SOME AGENT!
STOP IT, YOU TWO! THIS KIND OF TALK CAN ONLY LEAD TO...
TO FACTS, TRUTH AND JUSTICE, WE HOPE!
JUSTICE!? WHAT KIND? LEGAL JUSTICE--OR THE VIGILANTE JUSTICE OF YOUR SUIT?
THAT'S UNCALLED FOR, FERA!
HER FEELINGS ARE NOT TO BE EVADED!
SEE, DOCTOR KUG! WE'RE IN THE CLEAR!
NO THANKS TO YOU, BORON!
YOU ALREADY OWE ME MORE THAN THANKS!... YOU SPOT A SUITABLE REPLACEMENT?
YES, I DO SEE A FEW POSSIBILITIES!
I OVERLOOKED THEM BEFORE. NOW THEY MAY BE THE BEST CHOICE... LESS THEORETICAL, MORE PRACTICAL!
I'LL REMIND YOU TO THANK ME LATER!
ANYONE RESPONSIBLE SHOULD NOT GO FREE, MAC! I KNOW THREE INVOLVED IN FIELDS RELATED TO THE CONDITIONS OF OTTO'S DEATH!
THAT'S A GOOD STARTING POINT!
NO! LET IT END HERE, PLEASE!
IT ENDED FOR OTTO, BUT NOT YET FOR HIS KILLER! IF OTTO'S A VICTIM, THERE WILL BE OTHERS! WHO ELSE WILL WE MOURN OVER?
THERE'S NO PROOF EITHER WAY! OTTO'S DEATH COULD HAVE BEEN AN ERROR...HIS OWN FAULT! WHO'S INFALLIBLE?
FERA, OTTO NEVER MADE ERRORS IN EXPERIMENTS. HE MAY HAVE ERRED WITH PEOPLE, BUT NEVER THE EFFECTS OF EXPERIMENTAL ELEMENTS! NEVER!
THERE'S ALWAYS A FIRST TIME! OH, PLEASE, DAD! LET THE POLICE DECIDE! FORBID MAC TO USE THE SUIT ON ANY MORE FOOLISH ADVENTURES!
WHAT WAY? TO ROB, STEAL, PLUNDER, RAPE AND KILL?


WE'RE SCIENTISTS, FERA, INVESTIGATING TO FIND TRUTH, EVEN IF IT IS UNPOPULAR OR RISKY!
BUT INVESTIGATING CRIMES IS NOT THE BUSINESS OF SCIENCE, MAC. ARE WE REALLY SCIENTISTS...OR VIGILANTES?!
FERA, THE GREATEST EVIL IS THE WILLFUL DESTRUCTION OF A HUMAN MIND! WHEN IT IS SO GREAT A MIND, AND A MIND OF A DEAR FRIEND, BY ALL THAT'S SACRED, WHAT IS MORE HONORABLE A BUSINESS THAN AVENGING THAT MIND'S DESTRUCTION, WHATEVER THE RISKS OR COSTS? AND WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE? TO SANCTION MIND KILLERS AND SURRENDER EVERYONE'S MIND TO IRRATIONAL DESTRUCTION?
MAC HELPED ME CREATE THE SUIT, AND HE RISKS HIS LIFE TESTING IT! I WOULDN'T FORCE HIM TO DO IT, AND I WON'T FORBID HIM FROM DOING IT! MAX UNDERSTANDS CAUSALITY.
THIS IS DIFFERENT!
TRUTH HAS NO EXCEPTIONS, FERA!
YOU KNOW SCIENTIFIC TRUTHS ARE ONLY TESTABLE, NOT ABSOLUTES! AND YOU'RE GOING WHERE YOU CAN'T GO--FROM FACTS TO VALUES, TO UNSCIENTIFIC "TRUTHS!"
I SEE NO DICHOTOMY BETWEEN IS AND OUGHT!
FORGET THEORY AND BE REALISTIC! WHY, MAC? WHY DO YOU HAVE TO DO IT?
YOUR DAD COVERED IT! AND A TRUE THEORY IS REALISTIC!
I WON'T SURRENDER THE PRINCIPLES OF CREATION TO ITS ANTITHESIS, TO A RIGHT TO DESTROY THE SOURCE OF CREATION--A REASONING MIND!
MAC, I SHARE YOUR FEELINGS AT THE INJUSTICE OF OTTO'S DEATH! BUT WHY DO YOU HAVE TO BE SOME AVENGING AGENT OF JUSTICE?
BECAUSE I UNDERSTAND THAT JUSTICE SERVES LIFE, WHILE INJUSTICE DESTROYS IT. I BELIEVE I AM QUALIFIED TO BE THAT AGENT, AND I ACCEPT ALL OF THE CONSEQUENCES. IT'S NOT AN ORDER, NOT DUTY, IT'S A CHOICE, FERA--MY CHOICE.
I DON'T BELIEVE IT! IT'S THE THRILLS AND POWER OF THAT SUIT! IT'S AFFECTED YOUR MIND! PLEASE STOP BEFORE IT LEADS TO SOMETHING WORSE THAN ACTING FOOLISHLY.
WHAT IS WORSE, FERA, THAN TO BE ABLE, YET UNWILLING?
HAVE YOU DECIDED, DOCTOR KUG?
YES, I HAVE, BORON.
WITH CERN'S STOLEN NOTES, I HAVE THE MAN TO FINISH OUR PROJECT!
SO, OUR NEW CONTRIBUTOR IS...
DOCTOR SERCH! IT WILL BE YOUR JOB TO SEE HE AGREES TO COOPERATE!
DON'T WORRY. THIS ONE WILL LIVE TO SERVE!
AT LEAST UNTIL HE'S DONE HIS PART, BORON!
5


That night...
THE OTHER TWO PLACES ARE CLEAN, OR ALL EVIDENCE IS WELL HIDDEN! OH! SOMEONE COMING!
UNLESS I FIND SOMETHING HERE, OTTO'S KILLER MAY GET OFF!
HEY, OTTO'S PRIVATE NOTES! HMM... ON ANIMAL BIOLOGY! I WONDER WHAT THEY'RE USING THEM FOR?
OTTO WOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED THIS... IT WOULD HAVE HORRIFIED HIM TO KNOW THAT SOMEONE WAS USING HIS NOTES THIS WAY!
I'LL CHECK WITH DOC! I MAY HAVE ENOUGH TO GIVE TO THE POLICE ANONYMOUSLY!
OH! BEING BOMBARDED BY A POWERFUL FORCE! AND PROBABLY NOT YET FULL STRENGTH! OOOH!
WELL, NOW! WHO DO WE HAVE HERE?
THIS MUST BE WHAT KILLED OTTO! I HOPE THE SUIT WILL PROTECT ME!... BUT WHAT'S THIS TINGLING I FEEL? DOES IT MEAN THAT I'M VULNERABLE?
WHO ARE YOU? WHY THE SNOOPING?
MY WORKED OVER COPIES OF CERN'S NOTES! OH, NO! X@#!!
BLAST YOU, BORON! HE'S INVESTIGATING CERN'S DEATH!

IT'S ALL BECAUSE OF YOUR BUNGLING, BORON!
SHUT UP! HE'S KNOCKED HELPLESS WITH A GOOD TASTE OF PAIN! HE'LL BE NO TROUBLE! HEY! WHAT'S WITH THIS HOOD?
OOH! WHY... NEED CERN?
YOU DON'T NEED TO KNOW! WELL, BORON?
I CAN'T GET HIS @#/*?!! HOOD OFF!
OOOOH!
NO MATTER! HE'S ALL YOURS! FIND OUT WHO HE IS, AND HOW MUCH HE KNOWS! THEN TIDY UP ALL THE LOOSE ENDS, AND THIS TIME--NO ACCIDENTS! DO IT RIGHT!
IF YOU WANT TO SPARE YOURSELF, TAKE OFF THAT HOOD NOW AND TALK!
N...NO!
GOOD BOY! I'D RATHER MAKE YOU DO IT... AND YOU WILL DO EVERYTHING I WANT... EVERYTHING!
I WAS UNPREPARED WITH CERN, AND ANIMALS ARE TOO EASY! THIS IS MY FIRST CHANCE TO TEST OUR DEVICE WITH A MAN, AND--HA! YOU'RE ASKING FOR IT!
IT'S ON! YOU FEEL IT, SNOOP? FEEL THE...
PAIN?! EACH TINY EXPLOSION BUILDS AND BUILDS...
...AND NOW... BIGGER EXPLOSIONS ...AND BIGGER! YOU FEEL IT, SNOOP?
OOOOH!
17

THERE'S NO ESCAPE FROM THE EVER-INCREASING PAIN!
LET ME KNOW WHEN YOU'RE READY TO SPILL YOUR GUTS!
MY GOD, BORON! ENOUGH! HE'LL TALK!
THEN LET HIM SAY IT! I WANT TO HEAR HIM SAY IT! WELL, SNOOP?
N...N...NO... NO!
SAY IT BEFORE I CRIPPLE YOU FOR LIFE!
SAY IT
N...NO...NO. NO MORE! PLEASE! NO MORE... I... I'LL TALK, SOB..I'LL TALK!
TAKE OFF YOUR HOOD!
I'LL UN... LOCK... RELEASE, T...TOO WEAK... TO TAKE ...OFF...
AND YOU'LL STAY WEAK...ONLY STRONG ENOUGH TO TALK. I'D HAVE LIKED YOU TO HOLD OUT A LITTLE LONGER!
OOOH! I NEED ...REST! PLEASE!
BULL! START TALKING OR I'LL TURN THE POWER ON AGAIN! @#!! WHY WON'T THIS HOOD COME OFF?
S...STUCK...L...LET ME T...TRY...
WHAT?!
LOOK OUT, BORON!
HE BELIEVES I RESISTED...CRIPPLING EFFECTS...FORCE LEFT...ME...WEAK!
AAGHHHH-:-
BORON!
BEST CHANCE...MAKE HIM COME CLOSE TO ME... SO OFF GUARD--FOR THIS--SHOCK SHOULD MAKE HIS OWN POWER UNIT WORK...AGAINST HIM--I HOPE!

IT DID THE TRICK!
IT'S ALL OVER, DOCTOR KUG!
NO! STAY BACK! BORON! BORON! IS...IS HE DEAD?
I DOUBT IT, BUT I CAN FINISH HIM OFF, AND YOU TOO, KUG!
NO, WAIT! WE CAN MAKE SOME KIND OF A DEAL! PLEASE! THERE'S A LOT OF MONEY AND POWER INVOLVED IN THIS! WHAT PAYOFF DO YOU WANT?
BRING BACK OTTO CERN!
BRING BACK THE DEAD? PLEASE-- ANYTHING ELSE! NAME IT!
YOUR GUN IS AS USELESS AS THAT DEVICE AGAINST MY POWERS, KUG!
I HOPE HE DOESN'T TEST IT!
PLEASE! I'LL BE RUINED!
BUT ALIVE! CERN IS STILL DEAD! IT'S YOUR FAULT! NOW CALL THE POLICE AND CONFESS!
NO, WAIT! THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO COMPROMISE... PLEASE! I...I CAN'T CALL!
YOU CAN AND YOU WILL, KUG! TIME IS RUNNING OUT!
SHOOT OR DROP THE GUN! MAKE YOUR CHOICE; THE JUSTICE AND PUNISHMENT OF THE COURTS... OR AN UNKNOWN PUNISHMENT FROM ME!
...RUIN... DISGRACE ...PRISON...
NO! I'LL KILL MYSEL... AAAH!
NO YOU WON'T
THAT'S THE EASY WAY OUT! TOO EASY FOR YOU! YOU HAVE A LOT TO PAY FOR BEFORE IT ENDS FOR YOU!
CERN... AN ACCIDENT... BORON...

KUG IS A RUINED MAN WITH A LONG PRISON TERM, DOC! BUT IS THAT ENOUGH TO FIT HIS CRIME AND AVENGE OTTO?
OTTO'S LOSS OF LIFE CAN NEVER BE SQUARED, MAC. BUT, REMEMBER-- THERE ARE DEGREES OF JUSTICE. WHILE "OBJECTIVE" JUSTICE IS SIMPLY A REDUNDANCY, "SUBJECTIVE" JUSTICE IS AN INJUSTICE! ONLY WITH OMNISCIENCE DO WE GET PERFECT JUSTICE!
BORON AND KUG GOT LEGAL JUSTICE! IT'S SERVICEABLE, EVEN WITH ITS FLAWED MORAL BASE! OTTO WOULD BELIEVE JUSTICE WAS DONE, IF NOT TO HIM, FOR HIM!
WELL, MAC, YOUR MEDICAL REPORT SHOWS...
..YOU SUFFERED NO ILL EFFECTS--THANKS TO THE SUIT! NOW LET'S CONTINUE TESTING IT!
FOR A WHILE, I THOUGHT IT DID PEAK OUT!
THAT'S ALWAYS A POSSIBILITY, MAC... A REAL DANGER!
DOC... WHERE DID YOU PUT THE SUIT?
IN THE CASE. WHY?
IT'S GONE!
WHAT?!
FERA! DID YOU TAKE THE SUIT?
YES! I COULD NO LONGER LET IT CORRUPT AND DESTROY OUR LIVES!
DAD... MAC...IT'S CORRUPTED YOU! IT'S CHANGED YOUR WAY OF THINKING... YOUR TRUTHS AND VALUES! IT'S LIKE A GROWING DISEASE, AFFECTING OUR VERY EXISTENCE!
CAN'T YOU SEE THAT?
IT'S MY CREATION, MY PROPERTY, MY RESPONSIBILITY, FERA. RETURN MY SUIT!
NO! I BEGGED YOU TWO! THE SUIT MUST NOT BE WORN OUTSIDE! IT...IT'S EVIL! BUT YOU WOULDN'T LISTEN!
I... HAD NO CHOICE!
LIKE MAC, I HAVE BECOME AN AGENT OF JUSTICE! MAC WILL NEVER WEAR THAT SUIT AGAIN!
END.
10

ONE MAN AGAINST THE MOB IS SUICIDE...
THIS WOMAN AGAINST THE MOB IS *MURDER!*

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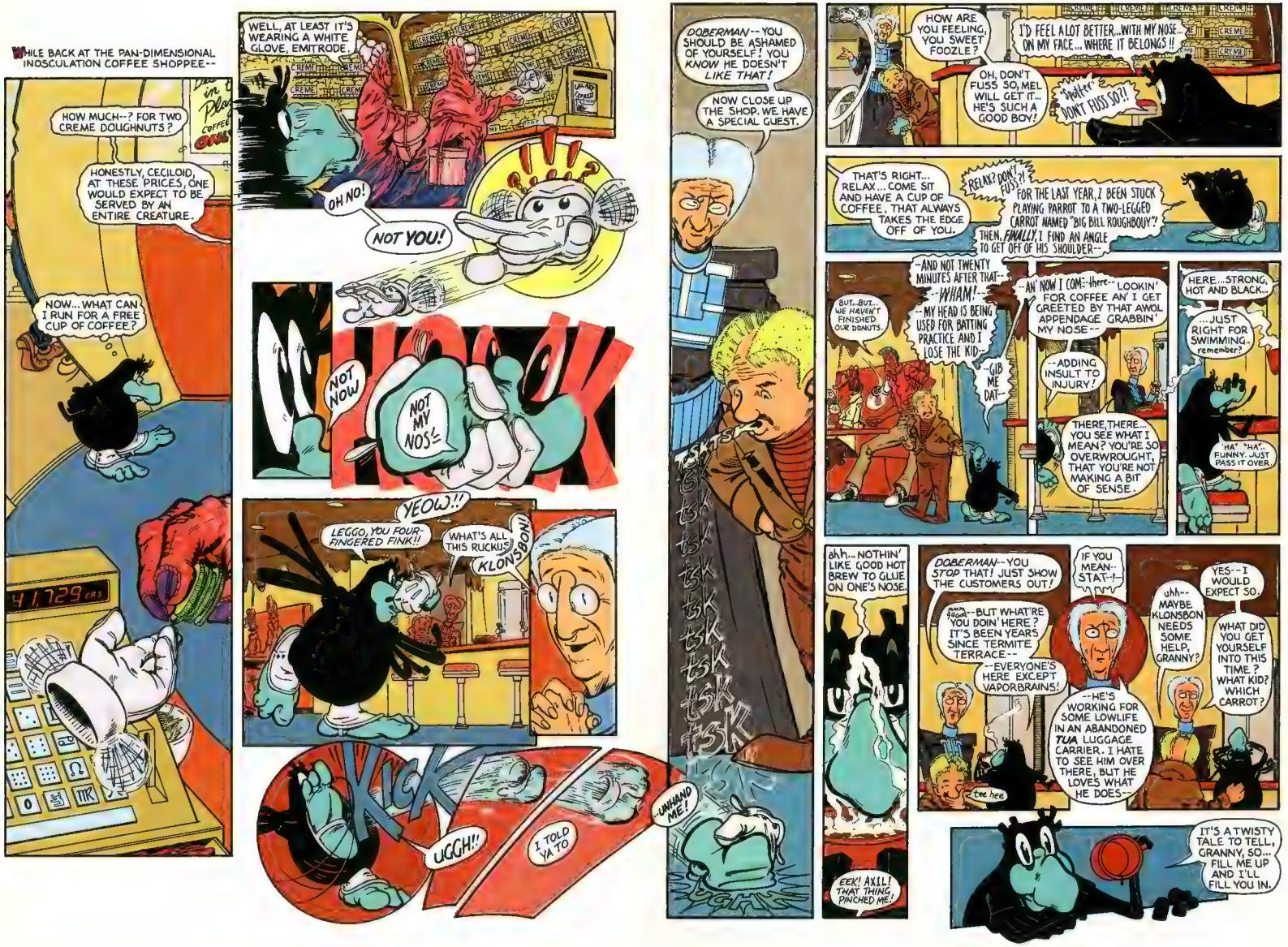
by Marshall Rogers
written by: GOLDBERG & ROGERS
GRRAWWS!
uuuh HOW HUMILIATING-- A BENT BEAK.
...OH, YEAH, RIGHT... ...er, left... I REMEMBER NOW--ONE FOOT IN FRONT OF THE OTHER.
OOOH, MY BRAIN MUST BE WRINKLED ALSO--THAT CAN'T REALLY BE A GIANT DONUT--
--NOPE! IT'S REALLY THERE! AND I SMELL COFFEE-- --SAVED-- --JUST WHAT I NEED TO SET ME STRAIGHT!
THEN I CAN TRACK DOWN THE CAP'N!
IF YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M THINKING ABOUT -- GO BACK AND READ OUR FIRST TALE IN ECLIPSE MONTHLY*1!

AND ELSEWHERE--
HOWCUM YOU DIDN'T BRING THE BIRD WITH US, HUH?
WHERE'RE WE GOIN', MISTER?
WHEN I GO FOR RIDES WITH MY DADDY, WE LOOK FOR DIF'RENT COLOR LICENSE PLATES--
CAN I LOOK OUT THE WINDOW?
DID MY PARENTS SEND YOU TO PICK ME UP? I DON'T KNOW IF I SHOULD BE WITH YOU GUYS--
--I'M NOT SUPPOSED TO GO ANYWHERE WITH STRANGERS.
SHUDUP AND SITDOWN, PUNK!
MOOMPH


WHILE BACK AT THE PAN-DIMENSIONAL INOSCULATION COFFEE SHOPPEE--
HOW MUCH--? FOR TWO CREME DOUGHNUTS?
HONESTLY, CECILOID, AT THESE PRICES, ONE WOULD EXPECT TO BE SERVED BY AN ENTIRE CREATURE.
NOW... WHAT CAN I RUN FOR A FREE CUP OF COFFEE?
WELL, AT LEAST IT'S WEARING A WHITE GLOVE, EMITRODE.
OH NO!
NOT YOU!
KICK
NOT NOW
NOT MY NOSE
YEOW!!
LEGGO, YOU FOUR-FINGERED FINK!!
WHAT'S ALL THIS RUCKUS?
KLONSBON!
KICK
UGGH!!
I TOLD YA TO
UNHAND ME!
DOBERMAN--YOU SHOULD BE ASHAMED OF YOURSELF! YOU KNOW HE DOESN'T LIKE THAT!
NOW CLOSE UP THE SHOP. WE HAVE A SPECIAL GUEST.
tsk tsk tsk tsk tsk tsk tsk tsk
UGH!
HOW ARE YOU FEELING, YOU SWEET FOOZLE?
I'D FEEL A LOT BETTER...WITH MY NOSE... ON MY FACE... WHERE IT BELONGS!!
OH, DON'T FUSS SO, MEL WILL GET IT... HE'S SUCH A GOOD BOY!
"Mel"? DON'T FUSS SO?!
THAT'S RIGHT... RELAX... COME SIT AND HAVE A CUP OF COFFEE. THAT ALWAYS TAKES THE EDGE OFF OF YOU.
RELAX? DON'T FUSS?!
FOR THE LAST YEAR, I BEEN STUCK PLAYING PARROT TO A TWO-LEGGED CARROT NAMED "BIG BILL ROUGHBOUY"!
THEN, FINALLY, I FIND AN ANGLE TO GET OFF OF HIS SHOULDER--
BUT...BUT... WE HAVEN'T FINISHED OUR DONUTS.
--AND NOT TWENTY MINUTES AFTER THAT--
WHAM!
--MY HEAD IS BEING USED FOR BATTING PRACTICE AND I LOSE THE KID--
--GIB ME DAT--
--AN' NOW I COME--there-- LOOKIN' FOR COFFEE AN' I GET GREETED BY THAT AWOL APPENDAGE GRABBIN' MY NOSE--
--ADDING INSULT TO INJURY!
THERE, THERE... YOU SEE WHAT I MEAN? YOU'RE SO OVERWROUGHT, THAT YOU'RE NOT MAKING A BIT OF SENSE.
HERE...STRONG, HOT AND BLACK...
...JUST RIGHT FOR SWIMMING.. remember?
"HA" "HA"... FUNNY. JUST PASS IT OVER.
ahh... NOTHIN' LIKE GOOD HOT BREW TO GLUE ON ONE'S NOSE.
EEK! AXIL! THAT THING PINCHED ME!
DOBERMAN--YOU STOP THAT! JUST SHOW THE CUSTOMERS OUT!
--BUT WHAT'RE YOU DOIN' HERE? IT'S BEEN YEARS SINCE TERMITE TERRACE--
--EVERYONE'S HERE EXCEPT VAPORBRAINS!
IF YOU MEAN--STAT--!
--HE'S WORKING FOR SOME LOWLIFE IN AN ABANDONED TUA LUGGAGE CARRIER. I HATE TO SEE HIM OVER THERE, BUT HE LOVES WHAT HE DOES--
tee hee
uhh-- MAYBE KLONSBON NEEDS SOME HELP, GRANNY?
YES--I WOULD EXPECT SO.
WHAT DID YOU GET YOURSELF INTO THIS TIME? WHAT KID? WHICH CARROT?
IT'S A TWISTY TALE TO TELL, GRANNY, SO... FILL ME UP AND I'LL FILL YOU IN.

AND AT THAT SAME ELSEWHERE AS BEFORE--
ARE WE THERE YET?
YES--
YES--
FINALLY!
YES!--
--WE'RE ALMOST THERE NOW!!
WHEN I TELL MY DADDY 'BOUT YOU GUYS, HE'S GONNA--
FOR THE LAST TIME--SHUT UP KID! OR I'LL USE THIS ON YOU!!
YOU'LL SEE--
SHUTUP!
YOU'LL SEE
WE HAF BEEN WAITING FOR YOU!
IS THAT THE PRINCIPAL?

AND OVER AT A

TRANS-UNIVERSAL AEROSPACE

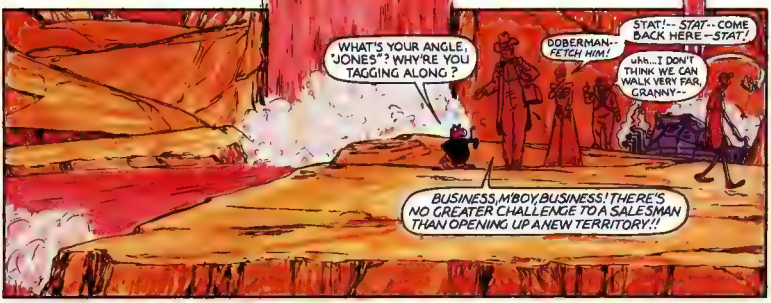
BAGGAGE HANDLING AREA--

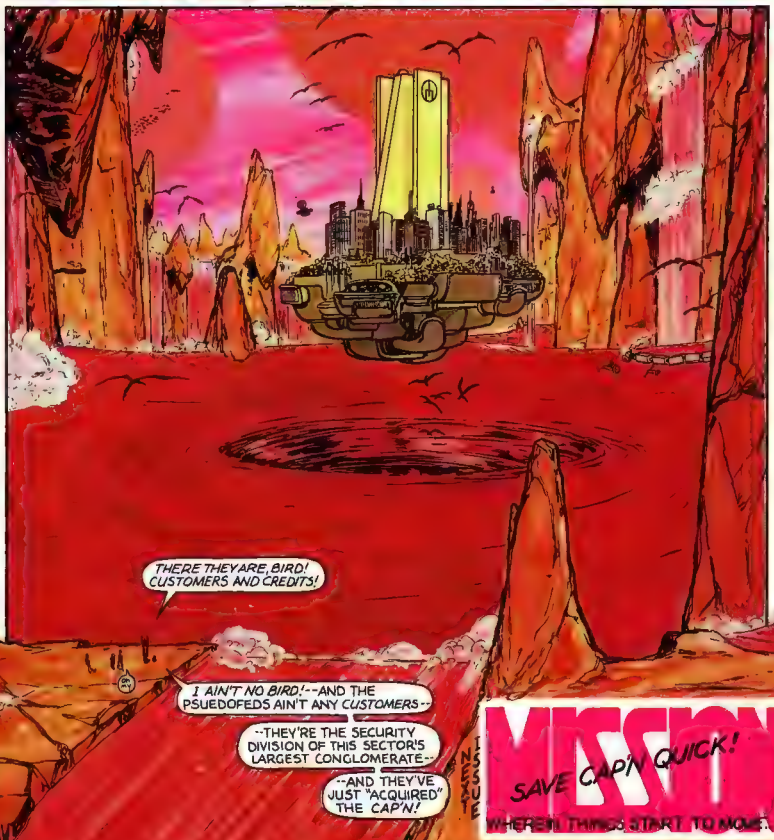
ING BAY 23
THIS GUY'S DOIN' A GOOD BUSINESS, GRANNY. YA...er... STAT MUST BE MAKING OUT OKAY.
hummph--ALL HE THINKS ABOUT IS DUPLICATION! IF ONLY I COULD GET HIM TO GO TO COLLEGE--
GREAT JONES
DOING BUSINESS! HERE!! NOW!!!
STOP PLAYING WITH THOSE ASTERACKS, JUNIOR! YOU MAY HURT YOUR FINGERS!
TWA
IF YOU DON'T GET AWAY FROM MY NOSE -- I'M GONNA STUFF YA INNA STRAIGHT-MITTEN!
HEY YO--!
'SCUSE US-- IMPORTANT BUSINESS--
JERK!
COME OVER HERE!--YE DOUBLE-DEALING DINK!!
YOW! I'M INNOCENT I TELL YA!
SHOR YE ARE!--I'LL BET YORE SETTIN' UP THET OL' HEN, SAME WAYS YE DID TO ME!
I LET YE GO, SO'S YE COULD TAKE CARE O' THET KID FROM THE BAR
I'M TRYIN'--
--TO DO--
--THAT--
--NOW! YOU MIGHT SAY, YOU'RE HOLDIN' ME UP!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS, SIR?
GIT LOST!
GRANNY, I WANT YOU TO MEET-- "BIG BILL" ROUGHBOUY-- THE 'CARROT' I TOLD Y-E
HUSH YORE BEAK! I'M STILL HIDING FROM THOSE GOONS FROM THE BAR!

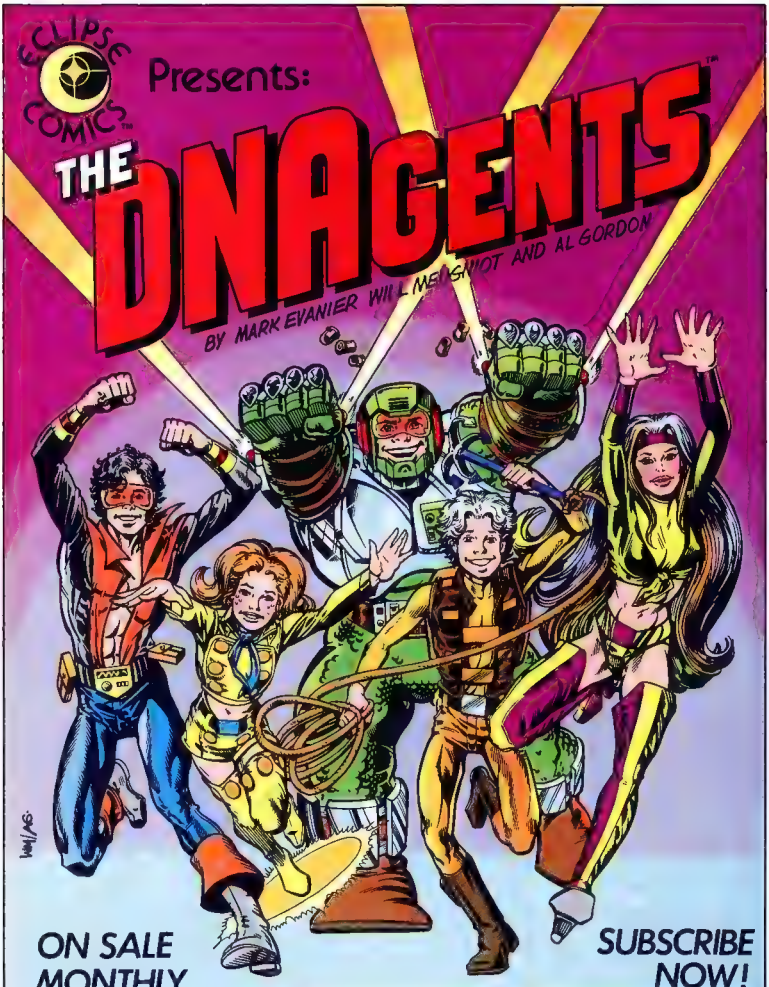
WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR YOU OR YOUR HIJINX-- Mr. "RUDEBOY"!
blub--
EXCUSE US...?
aaargh! he goes down, hit by flyin' debris.
YA OLD TEAPOT, YE'VE GUMMED UP MA BEARD GOOD! I'LL... I--
mmmm... YOUR CREME IS AS GOOD AS EVER, GRANNY-- BUT I SEE YOU'RE USIN' A DIFFERENT MODE O' DELIVERY.
YO! FOO--
--WHAT'S THET SIRENE?
THAT AIN'T YOUR ONLY PROBLEM--
"BIG BILL" ROUGHBOUY RIGHT HERE
JUST LOOK UP, UGLY!
LOOK! DOWN BY THE NOISE! IT'S "BIG BILL"!
HUH?
Y'GOT THOSE VULTURES BACK ON ME TAIL--
dumped again.
--BUT DON'T THINK I'M OFF'N YORES!
YOU OWE ME, FOOZLE--! AN' "BIG BILL" NEVER FERGETS!
THAT WAS A PLEASANT DIVERSION, BUT...
SMOOTH MOVE, MEL.
..WE MUSTN'T TARRY-- COME ALONG, NOW.
CAN YOU DO DOLPHIN SOUNDS?
surrrre.. WITH MY MOUTH CLOSED.
OH, PARDON ME, SIR, THAT WAS BEAUTIFUL! I COULDN'T HELP BUT ADMIRE YOUR VOICE! YOU MUST BE IN THE THEATRE!
WHEN I THINK OF THE TRAINING THAT IT TAKES TO HOLD A NOTE LIKE THAT...
MY SON, DEXTERS-- SAY HELLO TO THE NICE MAN, DEXTERS-- ... MY SON, HAS B STUDYING HIS INSTRUMENT TH THE GREAT LEOPOLD SELF, SINCE HE 3½ YEARS OLD.
'LO.
yeah... yeah... yeah... "THANK" to you too.
WOULD YOU BE GOING INTO SEE THE PROPRIETER? MY LITT ENIUS H AN IM T AUD JUST T EKS T TODA EN L JUST INUTE OF PR COULD BE A D R! YO KNOW HOW IS, I'M AN IMPORTANT MAN L YOURS GHT I AND O US- INFI THE GRE PL GRO SI HELL WHINE AND EY DAY YOU EAT ELENT COM ELESTIAL TO PRACT Y DEXTER AND YOU H RY DAY BE MO GGESTIO I'D AN HAPPY TO SI LEOPOLD O T MY MOR I E
OPEN UP IN THERE!
KNAWK KNAWK

KAVANK
UHH UHH GO AWAY CCHH...!!
I WISH THIS BOOK HAD A FREIGHT ELEVATOR!
MR. JONES--!
YAAAH!!
I'VE BEEN TRYING TO PULL THAT DELUXE HARPSOPHONE, (MODEL #472, SHIPPING WT. 800 LBS. PRICED AT A LOW 76,000 CREDITS) -- OUT OF THIS BOOK FOR THE LAST TWENTY MINUTES... AND IN TWO SECONDS YOU'VE FORCED ME BACK INTO DEALING WITH THAT LUNATIC STAGE MOTHER OUT THERE! NOT TO MENTION THE WEAR AND TEAR ON MY PERSON... hmm THAT COULD BRING THE HANDLING CHARGES UP--
--AND WHAT DO YOU WANT ANYWAY!?
WE'VE COME TO PICK UP STAT. IT SEEMS--
NO! NO! NOT TODAY!! WE HAVE A DEAL! YOU CAN'T!
THE STORE ISN'T SUPPOSED TO CLOSE FOR ANOTHER FIVE HOURS AND HE DOESN'T GET PAID UNTIL THE END OF THE DAY!
ACME DELUXE CATALOGUE
THAT LINE OUTSIDE! THOSE PEOPLE! THE BETTER BUSINESS BUREAU!! THEY'LL EAT ME ALIVE! THINK OF ALL THE WORK I'LL HAVE TO DO MYSELF! PLEASE! YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!!
I'M AFRAID SOMETHING OF A FAMILY EMERGENCY HAS COME UP, FORCING US TO TAKE A LITTLE TRIP. YOU KNOW I WON'T LEAVE WITHOUT HIM.
--WHO'S THIS BIRD?
JUST STEP ASIDE, SLICK!
I AIN'T NO BIRD!!
OH!!

STOP THAT, KLONSBON! YOUR EGO ISN'T IMPORTANT NOW. WHAT IS-- IS SEEING THAT WE GET THAT POOR CHILD FROM EARTH BACK TO ITS--
CHILD?
- FROM EARTH?!...
! OKAY! LET'S GO! I'M FROM EARTH! DID I MENTION THAT?... WELL, WHAT'RE YOU STANDING THERE FOR?-- WHERE'RE WE GOING? Hmm?
WHAT ABOUT YOUR CUSTOMERS?
SON, THERE ARE CUSTOMERS WHEREVER I GO!
I'LL BET.
AND SO... AFTER MUCH FAST-TALKING, OUR INTREPID SIX-PACK (minus a half-pint) IS FINALLY ON THEIR WAY--
GRANNY, HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW THIS BOZO? I DON'T LIKE HIM!
WE'LL BE DEALING WITH THE PSUEDOFEDS ON THEIR OWN TURF! AN' THAT AIN'T EASY!
A DIV. OF AIRTIGHT INC.
EVERYTHING WILL BE FINE. WE'LL JUST KEEP AN EYE ON HIM.
HEY, COW-BOY!
ALMOST ANYTHING, FRIEND! YOU NAME IT AND I'LL BET YOU WE FIND JUST YOUR SIZE--
--WHAT IS IT YOU'RE SELLING?
--JUST YOUR COLOR AND JUST YOUR PRICE RANGE! INSTANT DELIVERY, IF IT'S NOT TOO HEAVY!
HANG A LEFT AT THE NEXT FRACTAL CYNOSURE, MEL.
OKAY, GRANNY.
YOU SAY YOUR NAME IS "JONES"?
UH... GRANNY, 'SCUSE ME, BUT WE'VE REACHED THE OUTER PERIMETER OF THEIR RADAR. WE CAN'T RIDE ANY FURTHER WITHOUT BEING DETECTED.
THEN PARK IT, MEL. WE'LL WALK FROM HERE...
YESSIR! I'M ONE OF THE JONES BOYS! HERE'S MY CARD! KEEP IT!
OKAY, GRANNY.


WHAT'S YOUR ANGLE, "JONES"? WHY'RE YOU TAGGING ALONG?
DOBERMAN--FETCH HIM!
STAT!-- STAT--COME BACK HERE--STAT!
uhh... I DON'T THINK WE CAN WALK VERY FAR, GRANNY--
BUSINESS, M'BOY, BUSINESS! THERE'S NO GREATER CHALLENGE TO A SALESMAN THAN OPENING UP A NEW TERRITORY!!


THERE THEY ARE, BIRD! CUSTOMERS AND CREDITS!
I AIN'T NO BIRD!--AND THE PSUEDOFEDS AIN'T ANY CUSTOMERS--
--THEY'RE THE SECURITY DIVISION OF THIS SECTOR'S LARGEST CONGLOMERATE--
--AND THEY'VE JUST "ACQUIRED" THE CAP'N!
NEXT ISSUE
MISSION
SAVE CAP'N QUICK!
WHEREIN THINGS START TO MOVE.



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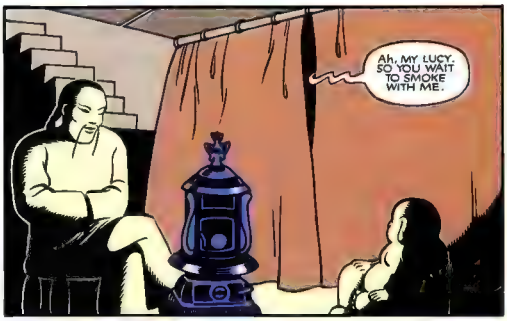
SAX ROHMER'S DOPE

ADAPTED AND ILLUSTRATED by
TRINA ROBBINS

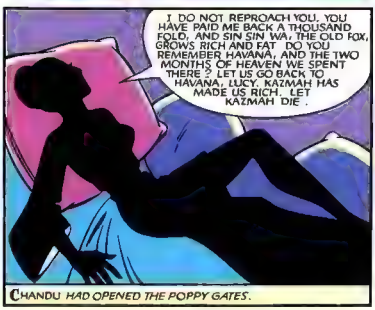
CHAPTER NINE
Above and Below

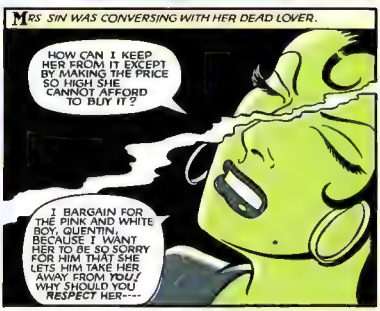
AT THE VERY HOUR OF KERRY'S ENLIGHTENMENT, SIN SIN WA SAT BEFORE THE STOVE IN THE DRUG CACHE. FROM THE INNER ROOM, THE COARSE VOICE OF THE CUBAN-JEWESS ROSE AND FELL IN A CEASELESS, HALF-MUTTERED SOLILOQUY.



PROPPED UP AMID CUSHIONS ON THE DIVAN, MRS. SIN WAS SMOKING OPIUM.
SOMETHING HAS CHANGED. YOU HAVE LOTS OF MONEY NOW. YOU WANT TO BECOME--RESPECTABLE, eh? YET ONCE I SEEMED BEAUTIFUL TO YOU, MY LUCY.

IF THERE HAD BEEN NO LOLA, YOU WOULD NEVER HAVE ESCAPED FROM BUENOS AIRES WITH YOUR LIFE. YOU DID NOT ASK WHERE I GOT THEM--THE TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS TO BUY YOUR "HONOR" BACK


I DO NOT REPROACH YOU. YOU HAVE PAID ME BACK A THOUSAND FOLD, AND SIN SIN WA, THE OLD FOX, GROWS RICH AND FAT. DO YOU REMEMBER HAVANA, AND THE TWO MONTHS OF HEAVEN WE SPENT THERE? LET US GO BACK TO HAVANA, LUCY. KAZMAH HAS MADE US RICH. LET KAZMAH DIE.
CHANDU HAD OPENED THE POPPY GATES.

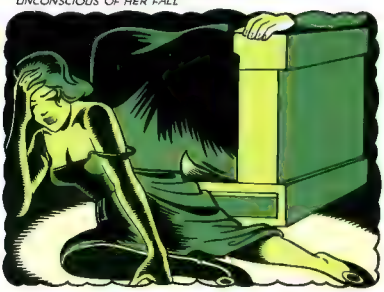

MRS. SIN WAS CONVERSING WITH HER DEAD LOVER.
HOW CAN I KEEP HER FROM IT EXCEPT BY MAKING THE PRICE SO HIGH SHE CANNOT AFFORD TO BUY IT?
I BARGAIN FOR THE PINK AND WHITE BOY, QUENTIN, BECAUSE I WANT HER TO BE SO SORRY FOR HIM THAT SHE LETS HIM TAKE HER AWAY FROM YOU! WHY SHOULD YOU RESPECT HER----

SILENCE FELL UPON THE DRUGGED SPEAKER, AND RITA IRVIN, A PALLID WRAITH OF HER ONCE LOVELY SELF, LYING UPON THE UNTIDY BED, STIRRED SLIGHTLY-- HER LASHES QUIVERING

AS OF OLD THE VICTIMS OF THE INQUISITION, WAKING OR DREAMING, BEHELD EVER BEFORE THEM THE INSTRUMENTS OF THEIR TORTURE, SO BEFORE THIS RACKED WOMAN'S MIND PASSED, ENDLESSLY, THE INCIDENTS OF THE NIGHT WHICH HAD CUT HER OFF FROM THE LIVING MEN AND WOMEN

THE HORROR OF THE MOMENT WHEN SHE HAD TOUCHED THE HAND OF THE MAN SEATED IN THE BIG EBONY CHAIR WAS OF SUCH KIND THAT NO SUBSEQUENT TERRORS HAD SUPPLANTED IT. FOR THOSE HANDS WERE COLD, RIGID, LIFELESS-- THE HANDS OF A CORPSE!

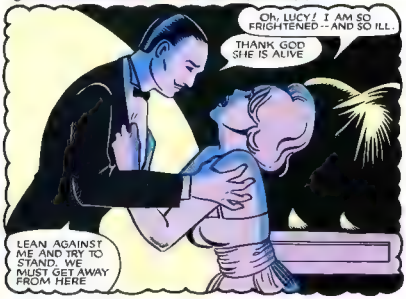
RITA UTTERED A WILD CRY OF HORROR AND LOATHING, SHRINKING BACK FROM THE THING WHICH SAT IN THE EBONY CHAIR. MOANING, SHE SANK DOWN AND WAS UNCONSCIOUS OF HER FALL



SOMEONE KNELT BESIDE HER IN THE DARKNESS; SOMEONE WHO SPOKE WILDLY, DESPAIRINGLY, BUT WITH A STRANGE EMOTIONAL REVERENCE CURBING THE PASSION IN HIS VOICE.

RITA! WHAT HAVE THEY DONE TO YOU? SPEAK TO ME OH, GOD! SPARE HER TO ME. I TRIED, HEAVEN HEAR ME, TO SAVE YOU, LITTLE GIRL. I ONLY WANT YOU TO BE HAPPY--

SHE FELT HERSELF BEING LIFTED, GENTLY, TENDERLY.



HE PUSHED OPEN A DOOR AND SPOKE RAPIDLY IN A LANGUAGE WHICH SOUNDED LIKE SPANISH. A SHRIEK OF RAGE CAME OUT OF THE DARKNESS

A FIGURE WHICH SEEMED TO BELONG TO DELIRIUM -- A LITHE SHADOW OUT OF WHICH GLEAMED A PAIR OF WILD EYES -- LEAPT UPON HER. A KNIFE GLEAMED.

SIR LUCIEN THREW HIMSELF BEFORE HER... SHE SAW THE KNIFE ENTER HIS BODY

THROUGH ABSOLUTE DARKNESS SHE SANK DOWN INTO A LAND OF NIGHTMARE HORRORS.

THROUGH VAST AVENUES LINED WITH IMMOBILE CHINESE FACES SHE WAS BORNE UPON A BIER.

A CHINAMAN WAS BENDING OVER HER. HIS SMILE WAS HIDEOUS, BUT FRIENDLY. SHE TOTTERED ON THE BORDER-LINE WHICH DIVIDES SANITY FROM MADNESS

TOWARD THE END OF AN AFTERNOON WHICH SYMBOLIZED THE WORST THAT LONDON'S PARTICULAR CLIMATE CAN DO IN THE MATTER OF DRIZZLING RAIN AND GLOOM...

GRRR

...CHIEF INSPECTOR KERRY, CARRYING AN IRRITABLE PEKINESE, CAME INTO A NARROW STREET IN LIMEHOUSE

THREE TIMES WITHIN THE PAST TEN MINUTES THE DOG HAD TRIED TO BITE KERRY. FINALLY, THE ILL TEMPERED LITTLE ANIMAL ESSAYED A FOURTH, AND SUCCESSFUL, ATTEMPT, BURYING HIS WICKED WHITE TEETH IN THE CHIEF INSPECTOR'S WRIST.

OW!!

HELL TAKE THE BLASTED THING!

I'M DONE WITH IT!

YIP!

A WHIMPERING CRY CAME TO KERRY'S EARS.

FLAMES! PERHAPS I'VE BROKEN THE POOR LITTLE DEVIL'S LEG

WHINE

SAM TUK BARBER

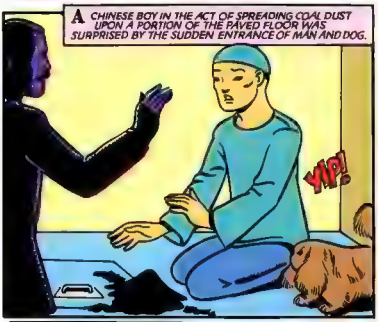
THE PEKINESE CROUCHED BY THE DOOR, WHINING AND SCRATCHING

TUK BARBER

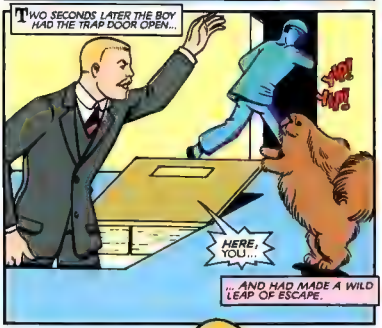
YIP! YIP! YIP!

KERRY TRIED THE DOOR AND FOUND IT TO BE OPEN.

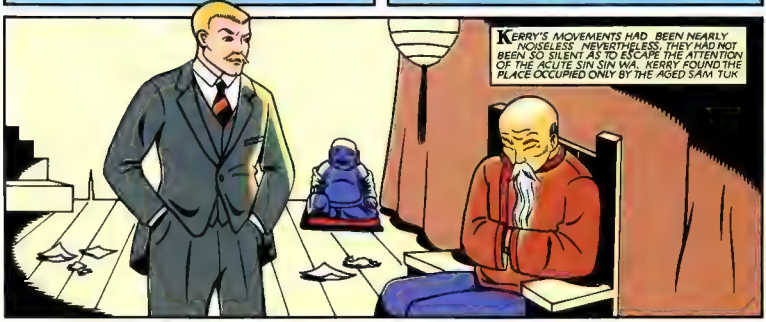
SAM TUK BARBER

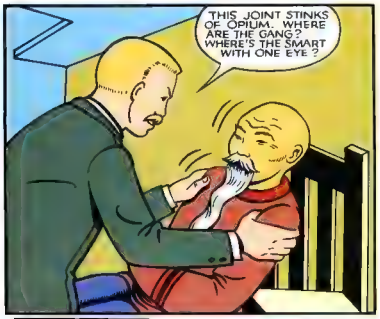

A CHINESE BOY IN THE ACT OF SPREADING COAL DUST UPON A PORTION OF THE PAVED FLOOR WAS SURPRISED BY THE SUDDEN ENTRANCE OF MAN AND DOG.
YAP!

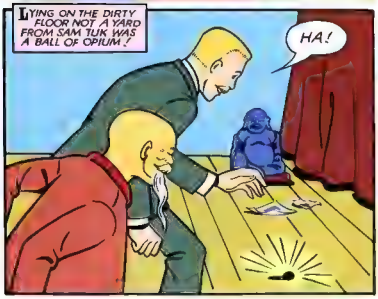
OPEN THAT TRAP, OR I'LL BREAK YOU IN HALF!

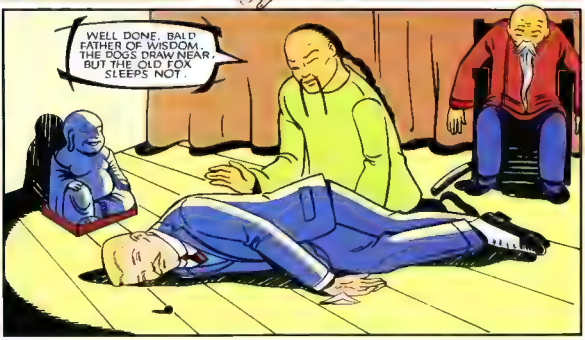

TWO SECONDS LATER THE BOY HAD THE TRAP DOOR OPEN...
YAP!
YAP!
HERE, YOU...
... AND HAD MADE A WILD LEAP OF ESCAPE.

OH, WELL, LET THE BOY GO.
AFRAID YOU MUST WAIT HERE, OLD FELLOW.
WHINE!


KERRY'S MOVEMENTS HAD BEEN NEARLY NOISELESS. NEVERTHELESS, THEY HAD NOT BEEN SO SILENT AS TO ESCAPE THE ATTENTION OF THE ACUTE SIN SIN WA. KERRY FOUND THE PLACE OCCUPIED ONLY BY THE AGED SAM TUK







TO BE CONCLUDED...

RIO THE HIDE BUTCHERS Part II by Doug Wildey

ENDSVILLE, WYOMING TERRITORY, ITS BOUNDARIES SPREADING STEADILY AS IT FATTENS ON THE INFLUX FROM THE MINES, TRAIL-HERDS, AND RAILROAD....
YOU SAY YOU GOT A JOB FER ME AN' MY BOYS, DORSEY?
I DO, GRADY!
BANK
I'VE PUT A LOT OF TIME INTO BUILDING A RAILROAD AND THE TOWNS IT SUPPORTS. I OWN MOST OF THE BUSINESSES IN ENDSVILLE!
WHERE DO I AN' MY BOYS FIT IN?
THERE'S A FEDERAL SNOOPER HEADED THIS WAY. HE'S A GUN-MAN NAMED RIO.
RIO? HE'S A LAWMAN NOW?
HE IS. AND IF HE POKES DEEP ENOUGH INTO MY ENTER-PRISES HERE I'LL BE IN DANGER OF LOSING GOVERNMENT COOPERATION! HE'S TROUBLE!
YOU WANT US TO AMBUSH HIM BEFORE HE GETS TO TOWN, HUH?
NO. AN AMBUSH WOULD RAISE A HUE AND CRY! BRAZOS, HERE, CLAIMS HE CAN TAKE RIO IN A STREET SHOOT-OUT. I'M GOING TO GIVE HIM HIS CHANCE!
BUT I WANT YOUR MEN TO BE IN POS-ITIONS TO BACK-UP BRAZOS. A KIND OF INSURANCE!
I'LL TAKE HIM EASY, MR. DORSEY!

AT DUSK, HOURS LATER, THE TALL MAN ENTERS THE TOWN....
HIDES
BOUGHT SOLD
YOUR NAME GROOT?
I'M HIM! YOU MUST BE TH' WASHINGTON ERRAND BOY!
YOU'LL HAVE TO SEND OUT YOUR OWN HUNTING PARTIES FROM NOW ON, GROOT. AS OF NOW THE SHOOTING OF BUFFALO FROM TRAIN WINDOWS WILL CEASE!
ANY QUESTIONS?
NO QUESTIONS... BUT HERE'S MY ANSWER!

GROOT'S FOUND ANOTHER VICTIM!
SALOON
FIGHT! FIGHT!
EIGHT TO FIVE GROOT WHUPS 'IM!
GIMME TEN TO FIVE!
HERE'S FIFTY ON GROOT!
NOT YET!
GROOT'S GOT 'IM!
PUNCH, GROOT, PUNCH!
GIT UP STRANGER!
TH' TALL FELLA DONE IT!
GROOT'S OUT COLD!

YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED, RIO. STILL BRAWLING IN THE STREETS.
I'D GIVEN YOU UP FOR DEAD YEARS AGO!
HELLO, RUBY-JOY. I'LL TAKE A ROOM AND A HOT BATH!
I CAN SEND ONE OF THE GIRLS UP WITH SOME SUPPER ON A TRAY FOR YOU.
I JUST WANT A HOT BATH AND A NIGHT'S SLEEP. I FEEL LIKE I'VE BEEN RUN OVER BY A FREIGHT WAGON!
SEE YOU IN THE MORNING, RIO!
YEAH, GOOD NIGHT, RUBY-JOY.
Y...YES, B...BUT RIO AND ME HAVE KNOWN EACH OTHER A LONG TIME, WE....
SURE, SURE, BUT YUH GOTTA LOOK OUT FER YERSELF FIRST IN THIS WORLD, RUBY-JOY!
ATER...
HERE'S RIO'S KNIFE, GRADY. YOU'LL REMIND MR. DORSEY OF HIS PROMISE?
DORSEY SAID HE'D TEAR UP TH' MORTGAGE ON YER PLACE IF YOU DID THIS JOB FER HIM, DIDN'T HE?

YOU KNOW WHAT TO DO WITH THAT KNIFE, GRADY.
AND YOU, BRAZOS, MAKE SURE THERE'S PLENTY OF TOWNSPEOPLE WATCHING WHEN YOU CALL RIO OUT INTO THE STREET!
WHEN U.S. GRANT LEARNS THAT HE SENT A HOT-HEADED, HAM-HANDED PISTOLEER HERE AS HIS EMISSARY, HE'LL DISAVOW ANY OFFICIAL CONNECTION WITH RIO!
THE NEXT MORNING...
COLD OUT THERE, RUBY-JOY. CAN'T BE MUCH ABOVE ZERO.
CARE TO TELL ME WHY YOU'RE SO NERVOUS?
I....I CAN'T GO THROUGH WITH IT, RIO! THEY'RE SETTING YOU UP! I... I.. ,,,, SOLD YOU OUT!
DORSEY HAD ME IN A BIND, RIO, YOU'VE GOT TO UNDERSTAND, I.....
I EXPECTED A BUSHWACK ATTEMPT. HOW? AND WHERE?
GRADY PARRISH'S GANG. ON ROOFTOPS. THREE OF THEM. BACKING UP BRAZOS!
SO DORSEY'S CALLED IN PARRISH AND HIS BACKSHOOTERS!

YOU LIFTED MY KNIFE LAST NIGHT. WHY?
I.... I... GAVE IT TO PARRISH, RIO,... (SOB) I'M SORRY, I.....
STEP OUT AN' DRAW, RIO,.... I'M CALLIN' YUH!
RIO!
WHA.... WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO?
DO? NOTHING NOW. I NEED SOME KIND OF EDGE. BRING ME SOME MORE COFFEE.
C....COFFEE? WHAT ARE YOU...
RIO! YUH HEAR ME? GET OUT HERE!
RIO AIN'T COMIN' OUT!
SCARED PROB'LY!
BRAZOS IS LIGHTNIN' ON TH' DRAW!
HE'S YELLAH!
'FRAID TO FACE BRAZOS!

LONG MINUTES TICK BY.... AND STILL THE TALL MAN SITS... IGNORING THE TAUNTING INSULTS SHOUTED AT HIM FROM THE STREET....
HE... HE AIN'T COMIN' OUT!
WE'VE GOT TO GET HIM OUTSIDE ... IN FULL VIEW OF THE CROWD!
NOBODY FIGGERED THIS! HE'S BEEN IN THERE OVER HALF AN HOUR ... AN' IT'S COLD WAITIN' UP HERE!
I'M HALF FROZE!
RECKON I'VE CUT THE ODDS DOWN SOME. THOSE SHOOTERS MUST HAVE PRETTY COLD HANDS BY NOW.

I'M HERE NOW, BRAZOS.... MAKE YOUR PLAY!

HE...HE GOT ALL OF THEM!
I STUCK HIS KNIFE IN GROOT LIKE YUH TOLD ME. HE'LL STILL BE HELD FOR MURDER.
BETTER GIVE ME MY MONEY, DORSEY... I'M FIXIN' TO LEAVE FOR MEXICO!

I DON'T PAY FOR FAILURE GRADY!
YOU AND YOUR MEN COULDN'T HANDLE THE JOB!

I'LL GIVE YOU ENOUGH MONEY TO GET OUT OF TOWN.... AND YOU'RE LUCKY TO GET THAT!

BACKIN' OUT ON OUR DEAL, HUH?
IN THAT CASE....
.... I'LL TAKE ALL THE MONEY!

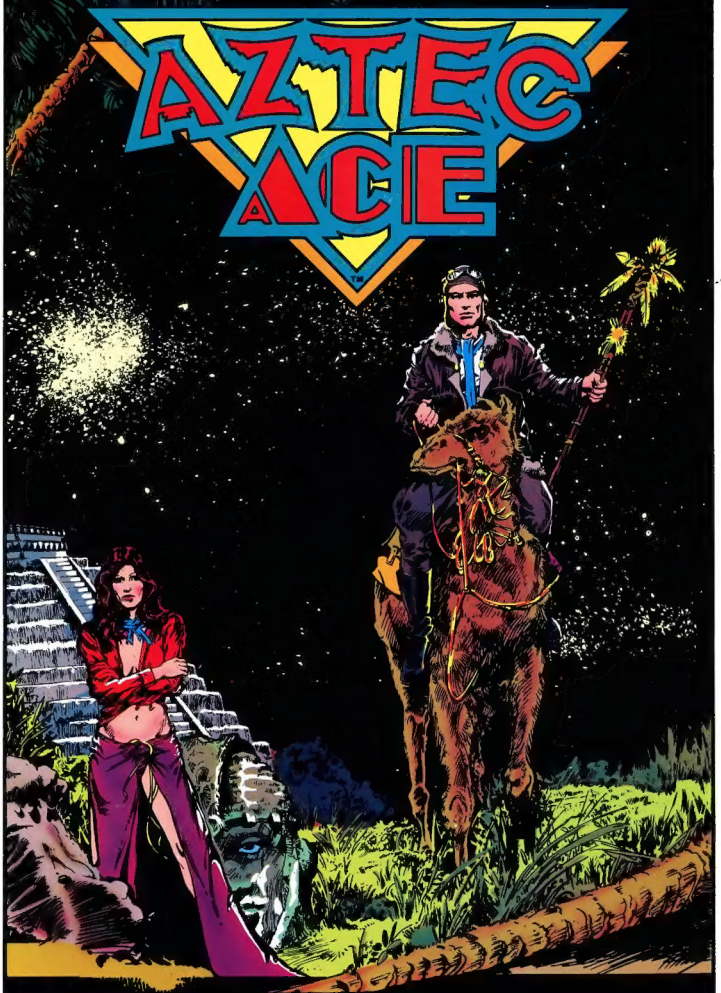
HOTEL
LIVERY

IT,,,, IT'S GROOT!
HE'S DEAD!
WITH RIO'S KNIFE IN HIS BACK!

RIO AIN'T BEEN IN TOWN TWENTY-FOUR HOURS AN' WE'VE GOT FIVE DEAD BODIES ON OUR HANDS!
SIX BODIES!
PHINEAS DORSEY'S BEEN FOUND DEAD IN A ROOM ABOVE THE BANK!
DORSEY'S DEATH WILL CUT THIS TOWN OFF AT THE POCKETS, RIO...
FOLKS'LL BE HOWLING FOR YOUR SCALP!
U.S. GRANT WON'T BUY THIS MESS AS IT STANDS... AND I CAN'T BLAME HIM!
MY ONLY CHANCE TO KEEP MY JOB IS TO GET GRADY PARRISH'S CONFESSION THAT HE FRAMED ME!
YOU'RE HEADED FOR THE BORDER, PARRISH.
CANADA OR MEXICO.
I'LL TRACK YOU TILL I FIND YOU!
End...

DON McGREGOR
TEAMS WITH
KENT WILLIAMS
FOR AN EXCITING
LOOK INTO
MELISSA
SIREN'S
PAST. A STORY
OF ESCAPE,
DISCOVERY,
AND LOST
VIRGINITY!
A MOST
UNUSUAL
SPECIAL
BACK-UP
STORY
COMING
YOUR
WAY IN
SABRE #7
SHE CAN BE
TOUGH, SHE
CAN BE
TENDER, SHE'S
SEARCHING FOR
MAGIC... AND SHE'S
NOT ABOUT TO LET ANY-
ONE STAND IN HER WAY!
Melissa
Siren
TM

Making the past safe from the future



by Doug Moench, Michael Hernandez & Nestor Redondo

Coming soon from Eclipse.

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